

THE SURRENDER OF AN EMPIRE

BY
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“During the last few years a sense of powerlessness must have come across those who have taken part in the triumphant exertions which the British Empire has made in the present century. Some spring seems to have snapped in the national consciousness. There is a readiness to cast away all that has been won by measureless sacrifices and achievements. We seem to be the only great nation which dare not speak up for itself, which has lost confidence in its mission, which is ready to resign its hard-won rights.”—MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL in a speech to the Navy League, February 26, 1930.

THE SURRENDER OF AN EMPIRE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE CHEVALIER DE BOUFFLERS
(John Murray, 1916).

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (Constable
& Co., 1919).

WORLD REVOLUTION (Constable & Co.,
1921).

**SECRET SOCIETIES AND SUBVERSIVE
MOVEMENTS** (Boswell, 1924).

THE SOCIALIST NETWORK (Boswell,
1926).

P R E F A C E

IN the study of every war there are two aspects to be considered—the nature and force of the attack and the organisation of the defence.

Great Britain has now been at war continuously for sixteen years, at first with Pan-Germanism and later with the world force we now know as Bolshevism. The successive books I have devoted to the study of revolutionary movements have dealt solely with the attacking forces, with the doctrines, aims and methods of Socialism, Communism and the powers at work behind them. I have endeavoured to describe the marvellous organisation that has been set in motion by the enemies of the existing social order, and to show something of the nature of the people composing this vast army of destruction.

But the time has come to turn to the other aspect of the situation and to consider the quality of the defence. Superbly organised as the attack has been throughout, how long could it have been maintained if adequate resistance had been put up at the outset? Could Bolshevism have been nipped in the bud in 1918 as the Netherlands Minister demanded and as everyone at that date thought it must be before long? In France the violence of the first great Revolution had spent itself in five years; in ten, Napoleon had taken the tormented country in an iron hand and stamped out—temporarily at any rate—the smouldering embers of the class war. Yet though for thirteen years we have been told incessantly that the Soviet regime was tottering to its fall, the despots of the Kremlin still hold sway over a helpless people, the dreaded Cheka still tracks down its victims far beyond the Russian borders, and blood still flows in village streets where luckless peasants dare to defend their property and the symbols of their faith.

Advocates of Bolshevik theory would have us believe that there must be some inherent virtue in a regime that has lasted

so long amidst the execrations of the civilised world. But execrations avail nothing against an organised despotism. They availed nothing in the case of France. Only a strong man could save the situation.

Unhappy Russia has produced no Napoleon, and in this mass attack on civilisation only one country has produced a man capable of grappling with the invading force of Bolshevism and of freeing his country from its deadly power. Everywhere except in Italy the peoples and their governments, as Monsieur Coty has expressed it, have seemed "paralysed, petrified before the monster, like people in the fable before the Gorgon's head" (*Contre le Communisme*, p. 14).

It is this inability of the civilised world to hold its own against the Soviet Power, rather than any enduring qualities in the Soviet regime, which has ensured its continuance up to the present time. The same disinclination to face realities, the same lack of organisation, and, worse still, the same treachery behind the lines on the home front which prolonged the war against Germany, have given to Bolshevism a new lease of life each time that it was about to fall. This strange phenomenon has occurred in every country—in Italy as well, up to the Fascists' march on Rome. All nations and all governments have shown weakness. It is therefore not my intention to represent Great Britain as singular in this respect. But because I have lived through what has taken place in my own country, and because its fate is of more concern to me than that of any other, I feel impelled to bring before those of my fellow-countrymen who care for England, the fatal consequences to which the policy of surrender to the forces of disruption has led.

In the following pages I shall endeavour to show how, from the beginning of the Great War up to the present moment, our worst foes have been those of our own household who—some through blindness, some through inertia, some through fear and some through perfidy—have weakened our resistance to the two most formidable enemies our country has ever had to face.

NESTA H. WEBSTER.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT WAR

WHEN August 1914 dawned in all the glory of summer sunshine and ripening cornfields few people dreamt that the advent of this festive month heralded the ending of an era. England, serene, secure, rooted in ancient traditions hitherto almost unquestioned, was to be no more. The little island that controlled the destinies of a vast Empire, separated by the rampart of the sea from the troubles of the Continent, was now to be permanently reft from her lofty isolation and drawn into the dusty arena of international strife.

There are those to-day who still maintain that England might have stood aside and watched unmoved the dismembering of France and Belgium. Throughout the past twelve years every form of propaganda has been brought into play in order to show that our participation in the Great War was a gigantic blunder, that "we were mad to fight," and consequently that the flower of England perished in a mistaken cause. This propaganda has not been without effect. The memory of the public is short and the great issues at stake in 1914 have been largely lost to sight. The younger generation knows nothing of the famous White Paper of August 6, 1914; it does not trouble to consult the files of the Press for that date, nor the *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, recently issued.

Penetrated by the Pacifist and Internationalist ideas that have become the fashion of the day, it hardly thinks of the War at all, or if it does, it is inclined to regard it as an aberration of a less enlightened age. Of the debt they owe to the men who fell on the battlefields of France and Flanders, the young men of to-day have but a small conception. The immense sacrifices of the War have been blotted out with printers' ink.

Because of this vast ignorance, deliberately fostered, it

may be worth while to bring the whole question back to its true perspective by recalling the causes that led up to the War. It will then be seen that it was not militarism but pacifism on the part of our politicians which hastened, if it did not actually bring about, the conflict, and later on prolonged its duration.

The War loosed on the world by Germany was no sudden explosion, but the outcome of a long-standing scheme of preparation. Its origins must be sought at least as far back as the time of Frederick the Great, whose scheme of Prussian domination contained the embryo of the pan-Germanism that in the nineteenth century assumed visible form in the Pan-German League (founded in 1890) and its numerous affiliations. The defeat of Prussia's ancient rival, Austria, in 1866, and of the eternal object of its hatred, France, in 1870, paved the way for the pan-German scheme of world domination to which naturally the British Empire provided the most formidable obstacle.

That England's turn must come next was obvious to a few obscure individuals who wrote to *The Times* after the battle of Sedan, but the public chose to be guided by Carlyle who wrote: "That noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefulest public fact that has occurred in my time."¹ England, always strangely grateful to the men who have misled her, set up a statue to Carlyle, and emblazoned his name in golden letters around the reading-room of the British Museum; yet no tribute has ever been paid to the foresight of General Gordon who, as early as 1882, wrote the following prophetic words:

Every Briton should think of the future of his country and cause each one to insist on the Government passing a measure for compulsory universal military training! So far as England is concerned, she need not, for the next quarter of a century, be under any apprehension of serious difficulties arising with any of her European neighbours, but in 1910 or thereabouts there will have arisen a naval Power which may prove mightier than she, and should she (Germany) gain the supremacy, England will become extinct both as a land and sea Power, and all her dependencies, including India, will fall into Germany's clutches. You

may live to see this. I shall not, but when that time comes, remember my words.¹

For years after the South African War, Lord Roberts and Sir Henry Wilson carried on their campaign for National Service, winning for themselves the unpopularity which, from the days of Noah onwards, has attended those who warned their contemporaries of impending disaster. In a speech at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester on October 22, 1912, Lord Roberts spoke of "the illusions of peace and universal disarmament" cherished by Cobden and John Bright, whilst Prussia was engaged in drilling "the mightiest and most disciplined force that this earth has ever contained!"

Amid those auspicious dreams of peace for what was that army being trained? Königgrätz, Metz, St. Privat and Sedan are the answer. . . . Now in the year 1912, just as in 1866 and just as in 1870, war will take place the instant the German forces by land and sea are, by their superiority at every point, as certain of victory as anything in human calculation can be made certain. "Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck."²

Over a hundred Unionist Members of Parliament signed a letter of congratulation to Lord Roberts on the courageous warning he had uttered,³ but the speech raised a storm of protest from the Liberals, one of whom, Sir William Byles, asked Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons whether it would not be possible to deprive Lord Roberts of his pension.

The *Nation*, in an article entitled "A Diabolical Speech," said that "there ought to be some means of bringing to book a soldier, in receipt of money from the State, who speaks of a friendly Power as Lord Roberts spoke of Germany." Lord Roberts, the writer went on to say, "is a mere jingo in opinion and character, and he interprets the life and interests of this nation and this Empire by the crude lusts and fears which haunt the unimaginative soldier's brain."

Lord Haldane, the principal antagonist of Lord Roberts's scheme of National Service, has been praised for the creation of the Expeditionary Force of 1914, but if Lord Roberts had been listened to we should have been able to put half a million men instead of 80,000 into the field soon after the outbreak of war. Moreover, if Lord Roberts instead of Lord Haldane had

¹ Letter from General Gordon to Mr. James Purdy, published in the *Morning Post* of September 1, 1915.

² *The Times*, October 23, 1912.

³ *Ibid.*, November 1, 1912.

conducted the negotiations that took place with Germany in 1912, would there have been a war at all?

Germany had made no secret of her intentions, the plans of her militarists were there for everyone to read—plans that were purely aggressive, and that aimed at nothing less than the domination of the world. A book that should be read by all the youth of to-day, *Ordeal by Battle*, has set forth admirably the series of warnings Germany herself had given us in the nine years preceding the War: the Morocco incident of 1905-6, the acceleration of Germany's naval programme (1908-9), the Agadir incident (1911), the proposals made to Lord Haldane in 1912, the German Army Bill and War Loan of 1913.

Amongst the proposals made to Lord Haldane in 1912, not disclosed to the public at the time, was one to which the British Government refused to subscribe, namely, "that England would observe friendly neutrality should Germany be forced into war"—which entailed an undertaking by England not to stand by France in the event of war between her and Germany, whilst leaving Germany free to maintain her alliance with Austria and Italy. In return for such an undertaking Germany would consent to give up the essential parts of her programme for the increase of her navy. *The Times* summed up the situation in the following words:

The price of a pause in German naval construction was to be our guarantee—unequivocable and applicable to all conditions—of absolute neutrality. In other words, Germany would consent to a pause in her schemes of naval expansion if we gave her a free hand on the Continent. The British Government refused to pay that price. . . . This full publication of the German proposals shows that their object was not to secure the peace of Europe, but to give Germany a free hand.¹

England, to her eternal honour, thus refused in 1912 to buy her immunity from attack at the expense of her friends; the only matter for regret is that this determination was not expressed with greater firmness and in a more public manner. Lord Haldane admitted that he returned from his visit to Berlin "feeling uneasy." "Germany was piling up armaments. She showed no disposition to restrict her naval development." But publicly Lord Haldane did all he could to reassure the nation, and in July Mr. Asquith spoke in the House of an

¹ Date of September 1, 1915.

² Lord Haldane, in an interview, in the *Chicago Daily News*, March 7, 1915.

exchange of views having been continued "in a spirit of complete and open friendliness."

The Germans, far from appreciating this conciliatory attitude, interpreted it as pure hypocrisy. In a German propaganda pamphlet published in 1921, comprising a lecture entitled *England's War Guilt*, by O. Hartwich, President of the National League for the Vindication of Germany's Honour (Rettet die Ehre), Mr. Asquith, Lord Grey and Lord Haldane are represented as the chief villains of the piece during these pre-War negotiations. "Grey used all kinds of unctious phrases regarding Germany," and the lecturer ended his account of Lord Haldane's visit to Germany in 1912 with the words: "Haldane's whole peace-mission is thus proved to be nothing but a trick in order to deceive Germany with regard to the Triple Alliance's preparations for war and to mislead public opinion."

It should be noted that accusations of this kind were never brought against Lord Roberts, whose outspoken attitude earned Germany's respect. Indeed, according to the author of *England's War Guilt*, a firm declaration of her intentions might have averted war:

Had England only clearly and positively stated that it would not allow troops to march through (Belgium), Germany would have considered other measures. Wilson's opinion was as follows: "If Germany had known that Great Britain and France would declare themselves united with Russia, it would never have undertaken the risk of a war." But England did not make a clear and definite declaration until Germany had already crossed the Belgian frontier.

This provides a striking confirmation of the opinion expressed by the French Ambassador, M. Jules Cambon, to Sir Edward Grey on July 31, 1914, when he said that were England to declare herself definitely on the side of Russia and France "it would decide the German attitude in favour of peace."¹

Was there ever better evidence for the truth of the maxim: "If you would have peace, prepare for war"? And which was the greater war-monger, Lord Roberts, who told England to prepare, or Lord Haldane, who declared in December 1913 that our relations with Germany were "twice as good as they were two years ago," and in January 1914 that "there was a far greater prospect of peace than there ever was before,"

¹ *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, vol. xi, edited by G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley.

yet afterwards blamed the public for not taking the war danger more seriously ?

The accusations of pro-Germanism brought against Lord Haldane at the beginning of the War have been vehemently contested by his supporters, yet he himself never denied the charge. Indeed, after the War was over, he was reported as saying to the London correspondent of *Vorwärts*: "The Germans are a great, tenacious, and industrious and indestructible people. I believe I know them well. I pass in England as a pro-German, and, as a matter of fact, rightly. This feeling for the German people has never altered in me, and I have never concealed it." These words were quoted in the *Evening News* of December 14, 1923, and, as far as I am aware, were never disavowed by Lord Haldane.

It is therefore idle to pretend that Lord Haldane was maligned by the Press of this country, and whatever tribute must be paid to his achievements in the matter of army organisation before the outbreak of war, there can be no doubt that his public declarations and his influence in the Cabinet were such as to lull the country into a false security up to the eve of the War. Whether in view of Germany's determination to obtain world power and the enthusiasm of the German people for war the conflict could have been finally averted is a matter for speculation, but no impartial student of history could lay the blame on the so-called "militarists" of England, whose schemes were of a purely defensive nature.

On the other hand, the attitude of the Liberal statesmen then in power was obviously calculated to increase the audacity of England's enemies. As Lord Sydenham has pointed out :

Lord Roberts, Mr. Leo Maxse, Mr. Blatchford and General von Bernhardi were the truest prophets at this period, during which the speeches of Ministers, who were presumed to possess full information, seemed eminently reassuring. Lord Haldane, the German expert of the Cabinet, declared at Holborn on January 15, 1914, that "Europe was an armed camp, but an armed camp in which peace not only prevailed, but in which the indications were that there was a far greater prospect of peace than ever there was before. No one wanted war." Many other leading Liberals seemed to be equally convinced that the angel of peace was abroad, and as in the spring of 1870, when Bismarck had determined upon war, the nation as a whole was regardless of coming dangers.¹

On January 1, 1914, Mr. Lloyd George declared to an interviewer of the *Daily Chronicle* that the prospects of peace

¹ Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, p. 294.

were so good that he considered the right time had come for reducing our naval and defence expenditure. And again as late as July 23, 1914, he forecasted in the House of Commons "substantial economy" in naval expenditure, and said he saw "signs, distinct signs of reaction against armaments" throughout the world. In the words of Mr. St. Loe Strachey: "It was he (Mr. Lloyd George) who led the Pacifist Party in the Government till the fateful Sunday Cabinet" (of August 2, 1914).¹ This opinion was also expressed in *Vorwärts*, and quoted in the *Westminster Gazette* of December 21, 1916:

Lloyd George was a pacifist. In the winter elections of 1910 the Conservative National Party painted the blood-stained ghost of an English-German war on the screen. The Leader of the Radical Party severely criticised the frivolity of this conduct and made enthusiastic speeches for an understanding with Germany. In the meetings in which he appeared as the most zealous apostle of all, he laughed at the Conservative panic-makers, who "already heard the march of German battalions on the streets of London."

It is difficult to explain this blindness on the part of our politicians. Apart from the warnings conveyed by the series of provocative incidents before referred to, apart from the open declarations of Germany's intentions in the books of German military authorities that appeared before the War, no intelligent person visiting Germany could fail to realise the hatred directed not only towards England but towards individuals of the British race that animated all sections of the German nation. Sir Max Waechter, himself of German birth, wrote in 1924:

About ten years before the Great War broke out I visited Germany on business. I found to my astonishment a strong warlike feeling apparently pervading the whole nation. Probably it was produced by the Press of that country, which, with one or two exceptions, was entirely dominated by the War Party. The idea of the War Party was to smash France completely, seize some of the Channel ports, and then deal with England. The latter was the main object.²

I can confirm this impression from my own experience. Never shall I forget the insults, the yells of "Verfluchte Engländerin" that pursued me as I walked alone, an unoffend-

¹ *Morning Post*, November 13, 1922.

Ibid., April 28, 1924.

ing young English girl, through the streets of Wiesbaden many years before the War. That this was not an accidental outburst on the part of individual anglophobes but part of a political plan was evident from the systematic way in which England was publicly derided. At the circus then visiting the town an Englishman or a Highlander became the butt of the clown's pleasantries, and in the window of the largest bookseller's shop hung a map of the world beneath which was inscribed in large letters: "Zu Deutschland gehört die Welt" ("The World belongs to Germany"). Already the plan of world domination was clear for everyone to see. From this moment I never doubted that the time must come when we should have to fight Germany.

It was inevitable that when the hour struck Germany should lay the blame on her adversaries for loosing the dogs of war. In a series of propaganda leaflets that are still being sent out by the Fichte Bund at Hamburg, the responsibility for the War is laid variously on England and France. Meanwhile the anti-Semite Nationalists would have us believe that the whole thing was brought about entirely by the Jews, *ergo* Germany was blameless. The favourite thesis at the beginning of the War was to attribute the responsibility to Russia. But this line of defence was somewhat weakened by the revelation that Russia mobilised in response to a false report which appeared in the *Lokalanzeiger* to the effect that German mobilisation had already taken place, and the urgent telegram from the Russian Ambassador in Berlin contradicting this rumour was unaccountably held up in transit. The incident was curiously reminiscent of the Ems telegram in 1870.

The frantic scenes of rejoicing that took place in Germany on the outbreak of war provided a striking contrast to the sober attitude of the British people. The hesitations of the Liberal Cabinet, whilst increasing German audacity, exasperated the patriotic elements in the nation, who throughout the week-end of August 2 lived in an agony of fear lest England should be disgraced in the eyes of the world by refusing to stand by France and Belgium. The relief that followed on these days of suspense manifested itself in a wave of enthusiasm born of the conviction that war with all its horrors was to be preferred to peace with dishonour. Never did a people enter on a mighty conflict with less jingoism and with a graver sense of responsibility.

Indeed, such was the tolerance of the British public that

two demonstrations were allowed to take place on this fateful Sunday, which must have led to bloodshed in any Continental city. One was the amazing spectacle of hundreds of young Germans collected in front of the German Consulate waving their hats and cheering for war,¹ the other was a mass meeting of British Socialists in Trafalgar Square, assembled under the auspices of the International Labour and Socialist Bureau, to protest against war. The latter demonstration was led by Keir Hardie, George Lansbury, and also by H. M. Hyndman, the head of the British Socialist Party, which had originated in 1881 as the Democratic Federation. Before this date no Socialist organisation existed in England, nor any purely British Socialism, and the Democratic Federation was founded under the direct inspiration of the foreign revolutionaries, who foregathered at the Rose Street Club in Soho, with a view to propagating the doctrines of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It was therefore only natural that the disciples of this German-Jew and those of his German comrade, Friedrich Engels, who helped Keir Hardie to found the Independent Labour Party in 1893, should champion the cause of Germany on the outbreak of war.

Hyndman and some of his followers later saw the error of their ways, and in 1916 split the British Socialist Party in two—the patriotic section that stood for the successful prosecution of the War calling themselves the National Socialist Party, whilst the pro-German section retained the name of British Socialist Party until they were merged into the Communist Party, after the War, in 1920.

The Independent Labour Party, however, maintained its anti-patriotic attitude throughout, and it was one of its leading members, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, then Labour Member for Leicester, who wrote in the *Leicester Pioneer* for August 7 that the reason "why England has practically declared war on Germany" is "that our Foreign Office is anti-German, and that the Admiralty was anxious to seize any opportunity of using the Navy in battle practice." And he added: "Never did we arm our people and ask them to give us their lives for less good cause than this."

In another article, which appeared in the *Labour Leader*, organ of the I.L.P., on August 13, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald published a violent attack on Sir Edward Grey, declaring that the European War was the result of the Entente with France,

¹ A photograph of this scene was reproduced in the *Daily Mail* of August 3, 1914.

and that we were in it in consequence of Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy—an accusation that the Germans at once reprinted, and have made use of ever since in order to prove "England's War Guilt." The Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, referring to this in the House of Commons on March 8, 1915, said: "I much regret that a paper containing such grave misrepresentations of the policy of His Majesty's Government should have been published at a time when these misrepresentations could have no other effect but to encourage the enemy."

The rôle of the Pacifists was thus, not to avert war, but to discredit our cause when we were fighting. Throughout the whole course of the War the I.L.P. acted as a focus for all the anti-patriotic elements in the country.

But it was not only the open antagonists of national defence who acted as a disturbing element on the home front. Every British patriot who lived through those anxious years in this country, following attentively the course of events, must remember the series of unaccountable incidents that marked the whole course of the War. A straight fight with the Germans could be faced with calm resolution, but the constantly recurring doubts as to whether all was well at home made the strain of the War almost intolerable to those who cared for their country. One has only to look back at the files of the *Morning Post* of this period, whose editor, Mr. H. A. Gwynne, played a most important and patriotic part in the discussions that took place behind the scenes, to realise the number of obstacles that were opposed to the successful prosecution of the War.

ENEMY ALIENS

The question of the alien reservists was the first to rouse the indignation of the country. As the *Morning Post* pointed out: "When war was declared the Government allowed German Reservists some days in which they were free to return to their country in order to fight our soldiers and sailors . . . the enemy was in fact presented with an Army Corps from England. Not content with this the Government actually forbade the Navy to capture Reservists from other countries who were on their way back to join the enemy."

An illustration of the way Germany profited by this indulgence was provided by a certain German Consul, a naturalised British subject who took an active part in persuading German reservists that their duty was to return to Germany and who was said to have remarked to an English neighbour: "I am

a naturalised subject, but naturally I am a German at heart." This man was arrested on a charge of high treason and condemned to death by the unanimous verdict of the jury, but the sentence was remitted on appeal.

CONSCRIPTION

Meanwhile man-power was the greatest problem at home. Owing to the delay in introducing conscription the pick of England's manhood was decimated in the first few months of the War, whilst slackers were able to take their jobs or to earn enormous pay in munition factories. As much as £12 a week was earned by some of these workers. On August 5, 1915, Lord Lansdowne wrote urging Mr. Asquith to have a conscription bill prepared, but it was not until May 1916, a year after the formation of the Coalition Government, that full conscription was introduced in spite of Liberal and Socialist opposition.

The policy of Liberalism is always to make concessions to doctrines in which it does not really believe. Although their leader, Mr. Asquith, had recognised the necessity of introducing conscription, many Liberals were therefore quite ready to sympathise with those who opposed it and in this way to make common cause with the Socialists. It is amusing to find the names of the future Communists, Sylvia Pankhurst and Francis Meynell, figuring amongst those of well-known Liberals such as Mr. H. W. Massingham and G. Lowes Dickinson, in a letter to *The Times* of January 12, 1916, supporting the action of a Liberal statesman in leaving the Cabinet on the issue of conscription.

In October 1914 the No-Conscription Fellowship was founded by members of the I.L.P. and U.D.C. to resist compulsory military service. In August 1915 the General Federation of Trade Unions published a Manifesto to the same effect, declaring that those who were responsible for the campaign in favour of conscription were "clearly actuated by partisan and financial considerations."¹ Mr. J. H. Thomas in a speech in the House of Commons on September 16, 1915, said on behalf of the railwaymen that the attempt to introduce it would be resisted even to the point of bringing about an industrial revolution.

¹ *The Times*, August 26, 1915.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

It was again Liberal neutrality that provided a loophole for men who did not wish to serve by introducing the clause into the Military Service Bill exempting "those who conscientiously object to combatant service." This might not have operated so disastrously if it had been made to apply rigidly to men to whom the idea of war was really abhorrent, but who were nevertheless willing to perform such non-combatant services as the country needed. The men who declared that they would not kill, but were ready to be killed and undertook work as stretcher bearers or on mine-sweepers, could in no way be regarded as cowards, but unfortunately the term "conscientious objector" was allowed to apply to hundreds of men who had never held any views on the ethics of warfare, but simply wanted to save their skins. As Mr. James Sexton, speaking in the House of Commons on April 28, 1916, foresaw: "The conscientious objector would grow and grow until everybody would have a conscience." (Cheers and laughter.)

Lord Sydenham, who was appointed Chairman of the Central Tribunal to deal with appeals from all the local Committees engaged in administering the National Service Act, referring to the conscientious objectors who appeared before him, relates that: "It was a revelation of perverted psychology to be brought face to face with able-bodied young men who declared that they would not intervene by force even to defend their mothers, and that nothing would induce them to serve in a hospital where wounded soldiers were being tended."¹

In the end, therefore, the clause in question proved extremely unjust towards the genuine conscientious objectors, such as certain members of the Society of Friends who had been brought up for generations to regard warfare with abhorrence, but who readily formed Quaker hospital units. The Quakers in general, however, had only themselves to blame for the discredit brought on them.² Instead of resolutely keeping apart from the political bodies opposing conscription, they joined forces with all the subversive elements in the country, so that the anti-compulsion movement became a medley of such societies as the I.L.P., the No Conscription Fellowship, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Church Socialist League, the Women's International League, the Peace

¹ Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, p. 325.

² I write with no prejudice against the Quakers, being myself descended from Quaker ancestors.

Society, the Society of Friends Service Committee, Local Labour Parties, Branches of the N.U.R., of the Women's Co-operative Guild and of the B.S.P.¹

In April 1916 a meeting of the No Conscription Fellowship was held in the Friends' Meeting House in Bishopsgate, at which a message from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was read out : " The conscientious objectors are fighting a magnificent battle, and anything I can do for you will be done gladly." Mr. Philip Snowden, on entering the hall, was acclaimed as the heroic champion of the conscientious objectors, but as it had been agreed that applause should be forbidden lest it should provoke demonstrations in the street outside, he could only be greeted with fluttering handkerchiefs. In the speech that followed Mr. Philip Snowden declared that never since the days of Judge Jeffreys and the " Bloody Assize " had there been such a travesty of justice as had been shown by the proceedings of the Tribunals. He held that the conscientious objectors who had written to him to protest against the conduct of the Tribunals were of the stuff of which the old prophets were made—" they were the salt of the earth."

MUNITIONS

At the same time that members of the present (1930) Labour Government were agitating against conscription—an agitation in which it is just to mention that neither Mr. Clynes nor Mr. Henderson took part—certain sections of " Labour " were engaged in placing obstacles in the way of an adequate supply of munitions to the troops. Although in April 1915 Mr. Asquith, in a speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne, declared that there was no cause for panic, a deputation of Glasgow munition workers, who were sent out in June to the front in order to study the situation at first hand, reported that from the wounded at Boulogne up to the trenches on the Yser they heard the same demand : " More shells and more high explosive shells."

The men in the hospitals, in the rest camp, in the dug-outs, and in the trenches all had the same tale to tell, that unless they had a sufficient supply of these shells they could not break through the strong German defence.²

The members of the deputation returned home to urge their fellow workers to greater energy, and in the following September a " Labour " appeal for shells was issued by the

¹ *Labour Leader*, January 27, 1916.

² *The Times*, June 18, 1915.

National Advisory Committee on War Output and by the Parliamentary Munitions Committee in their report on a visit to France in August and signed by Arthur Henderson, J. T. Brownlie and other Labour leaders. Yet trade union regulations and the selfish interests of Labour organisations were still allowed to restrict the output of munitions.

A writer signing himself "Constructive Critic," put the matter forcibly in a letter to the *Morning Post* of November 13, 1915 :

Why is it that Great Britain, once the workshop of the world, is still so slow in supplying the needs of the country at this supreme crisis in its history? Why are the noble efforts and willing self-sacrifice of the women of this country set at nought? Why is the efficiency of output in our arsenals and workshops only a fraction of what it should be and could be? Because some of the leaders of the Labour organisations see in this awful struggle an opportunity of enriching their class beyond their wildest dreams, and of placing themselves in a position, after the War, to dictate any terms they please. With this object in view they are using every means in their power to prevent men from working to their full capacity, and to prevent women from working at all, to the end that the golden period of high wages and plentiful employment for the members of the Unions may last as long as possible.

Mr. Lloyd George, as Minister of Munitions, in a speech to the Trades Union Congress, declared that the output could be increased in some places by 30 per cent. and in others by 300 per cent., if trade union regulations were dropped.

A fatal mistake made by the Government at this juncture was to raise the wages in Government factories far beyond the customary rates. To quote the *Morning Post* again in this connection :

At the present moment the nation is spending more than four millions a day as the cost of War. A very large part of this expenditure is inevitable, but another part, there is good reason to believe, is the result of lavish extravagance which Government Departments do nothing to check, but, on the other hand, do much to stimulate and aggravate. Anyone who is engaged in contract work for the Government just now knows that the rates of wages being paid are in many cases three and four times the ordinary rates, and that they have been driven to this level and are now being driven higher simply by the methods of the Government itself.

This inflated pay was the origin of the uneconomic wage prevailing amongst certain sections of unskilled labour to-day

which has contributed largely to the present problem of unemployment.

THE BLOCKADE

From the beginning of the War much anxiety was felt with regard to the inadequacy of the blockade. On October 21, 1915, Lord Sydenham drew attention to the fact that "great stores of cotton and other necessities of war had passed into the enemies' hands," and it was not until July 15, 1915, that Lord Emmott could inform the House of Lords that "supplies going to Germany in the last month or two" had been "curtailed." The whole of this question was very fully dealt with by Admiral Consett in his book, *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces*, published in 1923 (Williams & Norgate). No answer was ever made to the charge it contained and the usual method of the boycott was employed. Lord Sydenham, who vainly endeavoured to get the question thrashed out on the floor of the House of Lords on June 27, 1923, observes: "Behind Admiral Consett's revelations lie scandals which will never be exposed."¹

The most serious result of this leakage in the blockade is that, as Lord Sydenham points out, it undoubtedly prolonged the War. "It is certain that if the imports had been stopped, or severely curtailed, from the beginning, the duration of the War would have been sharply limited." As early as January 11, 1916, he declared at the Royal Colonial Institute: "The War might have been ended before this if there had been any clear idea how our sea power ought to be used."²

The clamour against the blockade carried on by Socialists and Pacifists throughout the War was thus directed against the one policy which might have brought hostilities to a close, and if it had any effect, must be held responsible for the sacrifice of thousands of precious lives.

THE SPY DANGER

The laxity of the Government with regard to the spy danger was another question that agitated the public mind from the early days of the War onwards. The sensational nature of the subject naturally appealed to the minds of the imaginative, and numbers of wild rumours were circulated. Everybody knew someone whose new cook had arrived with bombs in her

¹ Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, p. 361.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 319.

portmanteau, or who had been served in a London restaurant by a waiter who was unmistakably an officer in the German Navy. As a result the authorities became inclined to treat all information from lay sources with incredulity, and the application of the term "spy mania" to the very natural anxiety which existed with regard to alien enemies in our midst effectually helped to damp down the enthusiasm of many good patriots. Psychologically this was a mistake. Everything depended on keeping up the ardour of the nation by encouraging each individual to "do his bit." The Germans, by enlisting the aid of waiters and chambermaids in their service, inspired their humblest instruments with the sense that they were helping towards the victory of the Fatherland. The official British attitude of ordering the public to mind its own business and leave it to the authorities to keep the aliens under observation, quenched a spirit that should have been encouraged. It is a mistake to try to rule a democracy on the lines of an absolute dictatorship.

But the hostility of the authorities towards inquiring members of the public went further than this. People who expressed the least anxiety as to the activities of individual aliens were liable to find themselves seized by the arm of the law. One unfortunate lady was fined heavily for saying to an old friend over the tea-cups that she thought a certain naturalised German might be a danger. A third person reported the remark, and an action for slander followed. Yet not long afterwards a General in command of a Division in the district said of the same man boldly: "— is a damned spy, and I don't care who I say it to." No consequences followed.

The effect of this solicitude for the reputation of aliens was to produce an impression amongst the public that Germans were in some way being protected, which was particularly unfortunate in country districts where during the early part of the War successful recruiting depended on the amount of feeling that could be roused with regard to the enemy's intentions. To be told at one moment that not a word must be said against Germans and the next to be asked to go and shoot them was naturally perplexing to the bucolic mind.

THE HIDDEN HAND

It was this series of incidents, these recurring occasions for uneasiness with regard to the manner in which the War was being prosecuted on the Home Front, that led to the theory

of the "Hidden Hand"—a theory unknown before the War—and which was by no means confined to nervous old women or the scare Press. Energetic protests were entered in the House of Lords against the indulgence shown to Germans by the Government,¹ the permission granted to reservists to return to Germany on the outbreak of war,² the grants of naturalisation which enabled "aliens to supplant in their business Englishmen who had gone to the war,"³ the positions of confidence they were allowed to occupy.⁴

Lord Stuart of Wortley, in supporting the "Status of Aliens Bill," brought about by popular indignation at this condition of affairs, referred to the soothing assurance made by the Home Office on the outbreak of war that every spy had been rounded up, as "a manifesto that was ridiculous and fatuous in its optimism."⁵

Lord Wittenham described the impotence that seemed to come over each Home Secretary in turn: "When Sir George Cave became Home Secretary . . . I said to him, 'I am thankful you have come. Now we are going to have the real article.' Again there was this subtle, indescribable influence which, whenever he wanted to be bold, seemed to paralyse him."

"There is an influence in this country to-day behind these aliens," declared Lord Beresford. "What it is I do not know. We hear of 'hidden hands' and of other suggestions of that character, but there is an influence, there has been an influence all through the War, and the sooner we can get to the bottom of it and find out what that influence is the better."⁶

But earlier he had put his finger boldly on the spot. Speaking of the way in which "Germans"—for it was always assumed that these men were of purely Teutonic race—had got hold of power by getting into society and into all commercial and financial enterprises before the War, Lord Beresford went on to say:

It must be remembered that all these magnates are very rich, and are all international financiers. This is one of the great difficulties—the power of the international financiers—that we shall have to meet after the War.⁷

¹ Lord Sydenham on July 8, 1918, *Hansard*, vol. xxx, col. 684.

² Lord Beresford on July 8, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 654.

³ Lord Stuart of Wortley on July 26, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 1247.

⁴ The Earl of Meath on July 26, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 1234.

⁵ July 26, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 1245.

⁶ Lord Beresford on July 26, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 1229.

⁷ Lord Beresford on July 8, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 653.

Who would dare to breathe such words to-day? The very term "international financier" can now only be used with extreme caution.

The existence of a Hidden Hand was stoutly denied by leading Liberals such as the Lord Chancellor (Lord Finlay) and Lord Buckmaster. But even as a Liberal, Lord St. Davids found it his duty to protest against the speech of Lord Buckmaster:

I do not want—I say it frankly—the Liberal Party to be tarred with the words of the noble and learned Lord, because I think very few of us agree with him. I hope very few of us agree with him. . . . I used to think that the soft way with which these Germans were handled in Great Britain was carelessness, that it was softness of heart, but, frankly, I am getting suspicious myself, very suspicious.¹

My personal experiences during the War compel me to believe that these suspicions were well founded. Owing to the fact that my husband was officially employed to make investigations, and that our house, overlooking the Sussex Weald, commanded a wide view over the surrounding country, we frequently received visits from officers sent down to make inquiries in the district. I well remember on several occasions hearing these men employing the same phrase: "It is no good reporting all this. No notice will be taken. *We are up against a brick wall.*"

How often were we to come up against that brick wall in future!

It will be said: "Even if spies were at work in this country, what harm did they do?" To this only the Intelligence Departments concerned could give a complete answer. Numerous cases of their activities were, however, quoted in the House of Lords Debates before referred to.² The *Vanguard*, *Bulwark* and *Natal* were mysteriously sunk, whilst the blowing up of the *Princess Irene* in Sheerness Harbour was another incident of which no satisfactory explanation was ever given.

At any rate, whatever were the aberrations of "spy mania," rumour sometimes proved correct in spite of official denials, as in the case of Trebitsch Lincoln, a naturalised Hungarian Jew, ex-M.P. (Liberal) for Darlington, who was appointed censor at the General Post Office in August 1914 and was later discovered to be spying for Germany.

¹ Lord St. Davids on July 8, 1918, *Hansard*, vol. xxx, col. 669.

² July 26, 1918, *ibid.*, col. 1230.

Early in the War some fears were expressed by a section of the Press and public that Sir Edgar Speyer's intimate relations with Mr. Asquith might be a source of danger to the country. The suggestion was indignantly denied in Government circles, and Sir Edgar Speyer himself addressed the following letter to the Prime Minister :

46, GROSVENOR STREET, W.,
May 17, 1915.

DEAR MR. ASQUITH,—

Nothing is harder to bear than a sense of injustice that finds no vent in expression.

For the last nine months I have kept silence and treated with disdain the charges of disloyalty and suggestions of treachery made against me in the Press and elsewhere. But I can keep silence no longer, for these charges and suggestions have now been repeated by public men who have not scrupled to use their position to inflame the overstrained feelings of the people.

I am not a man who can be driven or drummed by threats or abuse into an attitude of justification. But I consider it due to my honour as a loyal British subject and my personal dignity as a man to retire from all my public positions.

I therefore write to ask you to accept my resignation as a Privy Councillor and to revoke my baronetcy.

I am sending this letter to the Press.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) EDGAR SPEYER.

To this the Prime Minister replied :

10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,
May 22, 1915.

DEAR SIR EDGAR,—

I can quite understand the sense of injustice and indignation which prompted your letter to me. I have known you long and well enough to estimate at their true value these baseless and malignant imputations upon your loyalty to the British Crown.

The King is not prepared to take any step, such as you suggest in regard to the marks of distinction, which you have received in recognition of public service and philanthropic munificence.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) H. H. ASQUITH.

On December 14, 1921, the following notice appeared in *The Times* :

SIR E. SPEYER AND HIS FAMILY
HOME SECRETARY'S ACTION

The Revocation of Sir Edgar Speyer's certificate of British naturalisation was announced in the *Gazette* yesterday.

The reasons given are that Sir Edgar—

(1) Has shown himself by act and speech to be disaffected and disloyal to His Majesty ; and

(2) Has, during the War in which His Majesty was engaged, unlawfully communicated with subjects of an enemy State and associated with a business which was to his knowledge carried on in such manner as to assist the enemy in such war. . . .

A second notice in the *Gazette* says :

It is this day ordered by His Majesty in Council that the name of Sir Edgar Speyer, Bt., be struck out of the List of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.

It would be easy to give a list of men—naturalised British citizens who turned against us in an hour of need, but their names are of no interest now, and the only purpose served in recalling their memory is to show that the public were not always wrong in their suspicions with regard to a Hidden Hand that maintained persons of doubtful loyalty in positions of trust whilst keeping well-trying patriots in the background. The astonishing way in which rewards for war services were dealt out was only equalled by the way in which they were in other cases withheld. It is, of course, comprehensible that, amidst the gigantic "clearing up" that followed on the Great War, people too modest to push themselves might be overlooked, but this does not explain why all kinds of Pacifists, Socialists, Internationalists and pro-Germans should have been appointed to important posts during the War and have emerged from it with honours, nor why aliens of doubtful loyalty should have been employed in public offices.

The Hidden Hand was no figment of a fevered popular imagination, and its operations have been only too evident since the War ended. The change that has come over the Press provides the clearest evidence that some subtle influence is at work to discredit everything we once stood for.

During the War the Press played its part gallantly ; even the *Herald*—now the *Daily Herald*—allowed itself to be carried away into occasional bursts of patriotism. Then patriotism was taken as a matter of course, and anti-patriots existed only as abnormal excrescences on the body of the State. Now patriotism has come to be regarded as abnormal, "an antiquated prejudice incompatible with universal benevolence." A flood of war-books has been poured forth besmirching the memory of the men who fought for England, representing them

as cowards, drunkards, men of debased and brutal instincts. Books on these lines can be sure of a wide circulation with corresponding profits to the writers. In view of the monetary advantages to be gained by these effusions it is not surprising they should come to be written; the wonder is that once patriotic newspapers should give them publicity and even accord them the most cordial reception.

One has only to turn over the files of newspapers that appeared ten or fifteen years ago to become aware of the extraordinary change in public opinion not only with regard to patriotism but to all dominant issues. The robustness that then characterised it has given way to a spirit of compromise, that leaves every principle on which civilisation rests an open question. Leading constitutional organs throw open their columns to the advocates of social, moral, political and religious disintegration, whilst closing them to those who would defend the very causes for which these same journals once stood. To think as we thought in those great but terrible years of 1914-18, is to be regarded as almost eccentric. And this not because subsequent events have disproved the "rightness" of our war-time outlook, but because the forces of destruction have triumphed, because the renegades who sought our undoing have been raised to power and honour, and because the flower of England's manhood lies buried in the fields of Flanders.

Were they "mad to fight," as one much-acclaimed "Christian Socialist" expressed it? Yes, perhaps—for some of those who came after. But they fought for the England they knew—the England of the future was mercifully hidden from their eyes. They rest in peace.

CHAPTER II

THE SABOTAGE OF THE VICTORY

WHEN the glorious day of November 11, 1918, at last brought calm to a tormented world, it seemed as if a new era of peace and prosperity had dawned on the human race. England, in spite of her immense losses in killed and wounded, in shattered lives and homes left desolate, found herself nevertheless in a particularly favourable position. The threat of invasion had never materialised, no devastated regions scarred her countryside, her fleet was intact, her credit unshaken. She could feel with pride that her troops had fought with the utmost gallantry on the field of battle, that the nation had displayed admirable fortitude throughout, and that the Dominions had rallied magnificently to her support. Finally, her greatest trade rival had been, temporarily at least, put out of the running. Now surely was the opportunity to capture fresh markets, to draw the bonds of Empire closer and prove to her sons beyond the seas that their allegiance had not been in vain.

As early as 1916, Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia, at a luncheon of the City Carlton Club on March 20, with Mr. Balfour presiding, had urged the framing of an Imperial trade policy without delay :

The British people . . . recognise amongst the chief causes of this war the desire of Germany to wrest from Britain her industrial and commercial supremacy. (Hear, hear.)

After describing the determination of the nation to defeat this design, Mr. Hughes went on to say :

There are some people in this country to-day, calling themselves British citizens, who would rather we lost the War than that German trade with England and German influence in English trade should be lost. They do not say so of course, but beneath the surface they are with Germany.

Of course, if Britain is simply going to get what it wants from Germany (cries of "No") as it did before the War, the matter is very simple. But if not, then the producers of Britain and the Empire ought to be told what the trade policy of Britain after the War is going to be (cheers) so that they can make their arrangements accordingly. If we are to attack this question effectively there must be organisation. We must attack it systematically and scientifically. We must see what Britain and various parts of the Empire, too, can produce, not only with commercial but with national profit. . . .

The Empire is capable of providing all the sugar consumed in Britain, yet we placed ourselves in bondage to Germany and Austria, eating an inferior article because it was cheap, while fertile sugar-producing lands throughout the Empire were allowed to lie idle. This war has rung the death-knell of a policy of cheapness that took no thought for the social and industrial welfare of the workmen, that mistook mere wealth for greatness, no matter whether the wealth was in our hands or those of German Jews. (Cheers.) Well, after this war where are we going to get our sugar—from the Empire or from Germany and Austria? What new industries are we going to establish? What old ones are we going to develop? . . . These are questions that ought to be answered now. (Cheers.) . . . To delay the public declaration of what our trade policy is to be is to make the work of attempting to eradicate German influence in our midst infinitely more difficult and to make any radical change after the War impossible.¹ To pretend otherwise is to throw dust in the eyes of the people, to play the game of Germany, to prolong the War, indelibly to stamp Britain as a nation of men not fit to carry the great burden of Empire. This is our hour, our opportunity, which, being let slip, will pass for ever. . . .

The men of Australia and indeed of all the Dominions are looking to you for a sign. They expect from you a plain statement of what the policy of Britain is to be. (Hear, hear.) We want something plain and definite, and we want it now.

Unhappily the "hears!" and cheers that punctuated this stirring appeal led to no definite plan of action; the influence of the financiers in the City and of "those people calling

¹ On the very day of writing these words, March 16, 1930, I read the following in the *Daily Express* under the heading: "Enemies in 1914: Business as usual in 1930. German Push": "There are 12,000 Germans in this country—the largest number since friendly relations were resumed after the War. Four thousand of them are visiting business men. . . . During the past month German business men, buyers and salesmen, have landed in England at the rate of more than 500 a day. . . . A German official in London has been preparing the statistics of trade between the two countries, and his figures show that while German exports to England are rapidly approaching pre-war level, British exports show a steady decline. . . . 'Germany's trade push is succeeding,' said the official," etc. This at a moment when the condition of British industry is described as desperate.

themselves British citizens," who, as Mr. Hughes had pointed out, thought less of winning the War than of maintaining profitable relations with Germany, was allowed to prevail and the world markets that Britain might have captured were lost to her perhaps for ever. Why, instead of promising "homes for heroes," did not the Government, the moment the War ended, set out on some great scheme of Empire development that would have obviated all the years of unemployment and industrial unrest that followed? Surely the first thing for Great Britain to do was to consolidate the Empire?

The second was to consolidate the position of the Allies if another war was to be averted. Above all, it was necessary to maintain and strengthen the Entente with France and to guarantee her security in the future. Whatever misunderstandings might have arisen, largely through temperamental differences, between the two countries during the War one fact remained—France, owing to her geographical position, had borne the brunt of the conflict, and she had borne it as much on our behalf as on her own. To represent the British Expeditionary Force as merely "going to the rescue of France," was absurd. It is true we were bound in honour to stand by her, but we were also acting in self-defence. As Sir Max Waechter had pointed out, in the passage already quoted, *England was the real objective*. France and Belgium lay between Germany and her principal aim—the destruction of the British Empire. Therefore, if this design was to be finally thwarted, it could only be through common action on the part of the Allies to hold Germany in check in the future.

For four years the Press and politicians of the Allied countries had ceaselessly repeated that this was "a war to end wars" by destroying "German militarism." This was not to say that the martial spirit in Germany was to be condemned, but rather that Prussian spirit of ruthless aggression of which a hundred and forty years earlier Maria Theresa recognised the danger when she wrote these prophetic words in 1778:

To-day we endure the influence of that military and despotic monarchy (Prussia) which recognises no principle, but which, in all that it does and all that it undertakes, always pursues the same goal, its own interest and its exclusive advantage. If this Prussian principle is allowed to continue to gain ground, what hope is there for those who will succeed us one day? ¹

¹ N. Deschamps, *Les Sociétés Secrètes et la Société* (1882), vol. ii, p. 398, quoting the *Hessische Volksblätter*.

This was the "militarism" that had triumphed in 1866 and 1870, conquering not only France but subjugating all Germany to its influence, and that again in 1914 loosed the Great War upon the world. What aberration then led the Allies to break up the Austrian rather than the German Empire? Austria and Hungary had always been two of England's best friends on the Continent, there had never been any Austrian plan of world domination and, if in 1914 Austria had allowed herself to be made the cat's paw of Germany, it was surely unjust to ordain her dismemberment whilst her instigator and ancient enemy Germany, though diminished in area, was allowed to remain united. But for this misguided policy there would have been no talk of the "Anschluss" which to-day threatens Europe with Austria as a province of the German Reich.

To break up Germany into her component parts would, moreover, not only have averted this danger but have contributed to the ultimate welfare of the German people themselves by freeing them from the hegemony of Prussia. Here was the chance to restore the "good, peaceful old Germany" of which Victorians spoke regretfully during the War, by which they meant Germany as she had been before the Prussianising process had been completed in 1870. That such a policy might have found some support amongst the Germans themselves seems probable in view of the deep discontent that arose at the end of the War which led to the flight of the Kaiser, and of the Separatist movement that spontaneously asserted itself in the Rhineland and continued up till 1924.

On the part of the great mass of the people this discontent was, however, not so much a revulsion against the War, on which they had entered with enthusiasm, as a display of resentment against their leaders for their failure to bring it to a successful conclusion. With war itself they were not entirely disillusioned; they had not experienced prolonged invasion; except in East Prussia, not a shot had been fired on German soil. In a word, they had known privations but not indignities during the War, such as France and Belgium had endured. The disinclination of the Allies to sacrifice further lives by following up the retreating German armies and celebrating the victory in Berlin had spared the German nation a humiliation that might have gone far to quench its ardour for further military adventures.

It was still possible, however, to bring the lesson of the War home to Germany by showing a firmness and resolution that

she would have understood and respected. We know well that she herself would have displayed no weakness had she been the victor. According to a curious letter from the wife of a German merchant in Bremen, published in Mr. Page's book on the War, the German plan was to invade England and carry out a campaign of extermination. The manufacturing towns of the North were to be "wiped out" and the inhabitants destroyed.¹

A more responsible expression of German opinion was contained in Germany's Peace Terms as laid down by Count von Roon (a member of the Prussian Upper House), in May 1918, as follows :

1. No armistice on sea or land until the British troops are cleared out of France and Belgium, and the Germans are in Paris.
2. Annexation of Belgium, and of the coast of Calais.
3. Annexation of the Briey-Longwy region, N.E. France.
4. France to surrender Belfort, Toul and Verdun, and the territory to the east of those places.
5. Return of the German Colonies.
6. England to surrender her coaling stations, and to return Gibraltar to Spain.
7. The whole British Navy to surrender.
8. England to return Egypt, with the Suez Canal, to Turkey.
9. Evacuation of Greece, and restoration of King Constantine.
10. Division of Serbia and Montenegro between Austria and Bulgaria.
11. Payment of an indemnity of £9,000,000,000 by America, England and France.
12. Occupation of French and Belgian territory to continue until this agreement is carried out, the Allies paying cost of occupation.²

Without attributing too much importance to the utterances of individuals, we may safely conclude that if Germany had won these are not unlike the conditions she would have made, at any rate the terms she would have imposed would have been immeasurably more severe than those laid down by the Allies, and she would have enforced them with ruthless severity. No sentimental considerations would have weighed with her for a moment.

Our policy then was clearly to treat Germany, without the harshness, but with the determination she would have shown to a vanquished enemy, to dictate terms, not in a spirit of

¹ *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (1922), vol. i, p. 347.

² *Daily Chronicle*, July 1, 1918.

revenge, but with the object of deterring her from again disturbing the peace of Europe.

Yet this was precisely what the Pacifists of Great Britain were determined to prevent. The ink was hardly dry on the terms of the Armistice before the cry of "Don't humiliate Germany!" was heard on all sides. Specious arguments were advanced to show that to make Germany suffer for the tragedy she had brought upon the world would rouse in her a spirit of revenge which, at all costs, must be avoided. Such a conclusion was, of course, contrary to all the teachings of history. It is not defeat, but successful warfare that acts as an incentive to the military spirit. It was the victory of Königgrätz that had encouraged Prussia to make war on France, the victory of Sedan that had fired her to set forth on further schemes of conquest. From 1870 onwards, it was not vanquished France but triumphant Germany that thirsted to renew the conflict. The defeat of Germany in 1918 was the supreme opportunity for dispelling the pan-German dream. For this, the more enlightened statesmen in the countries of the Allies had sounded the call to arms in 1914; for this, countless noble lives had been sacrificed; for this, blood and treasure had been poured out during four long years of agony. But now that the fruits of victory were within their grasp, a kind of fear seemed to come over the Allies, a kind of stupefaction at the magnitude of the thing that they had done. The mighty German colossus was tottering, but whilst the nations watched breathless for the crash, President Wilson, armed with his Fourteen Points and the League of Nations in his train, advanced to break its fall.

Far be it from me to decry the whole conception of a "League of Nations" as a means for settling international disputes by arbitration rather than by a recourse to arms. The idea was by no means a new one. Sully attributed a scheme of the same kind to Henri IV, and later, in 1713, the Abbé de Saint Pierre published his *Projet de Paix Perpétuelle* in which he proposed the formation of a supreme tribunal of the nations.

The desire to put an end to wars has fired noble and humane minds throughout the ages. What indeed could be more desirable? That at the present stage of civilisation the highest faculties of the human mind should be turned to the science of destruction; that quarrels between nations should be settled by physical force, and that peace-loving human beings who never wished another any harm should be killed

or hideously wounded on account of some disagreement over frontiers, must seem at first sight a grotesque anachronism to any thinking mind. Duelling has long since gone out of fashion, why not war?

But to reason thus and stop short at this point is to make no allowances for the diversity or vagaries of human nature. The man who is peace-loving imagines that every man at heart must be the same. He forgets that in spite of increasing civilisation there are still men and races of men to whom warfare is as the breath of life. I have talked with Germans since the War who have made no secret of this attitude of mind: "Of course we Germans love war; war is the finest thing in the world, we shall always love it"—this was the tenor of their discourse. Other races again, whilst normally peace-loving, may be suddenly roused to a war fever by force of circumstances which could not have been foreseen. A page from the history of revolutionary France may serve to show how the most enthusiastic advocates of "perpetual peace" can be transformed into the most ardent jingoists.

On May 15, 1790, a debate on peace and war took place in the Constituent Assembly. The motion proposed by Robespierre and seconded by Pétion ran:

We must declare that France renounces all ambitious projects, all conquests, and that she regards her boundaries as fixed by eternal destiny.

The proposal was received with acclamations.

"National pacts between just peoples," said Reubell and Dupont de Nemours.

"Let all nations be free like us," cried the curé Rollet, "and there will be no more war!"

"The Assembly," writes Sorel, "believes it, and the phrase goes to its head. Such is the power of illusions, the men who three years later were to boast before the Convention of the most exclusive and fanatical patriotism so as to impose on armed France their Republic on the Roman plan, now would not be reminded that they were Frenchmen, that France had frontiers, and that these frontiers are lined with rivals and enemies."

Alarmed for the cause of patriotism, an officer of the Right, Cazalès, rose and declared:

Our country must be the sole object of our love. Love of country makes more than men, it makes citizens. . . . As for me, I declare

that it is not the Russians, the Germans, the English that I love, it is the French that are dear to me. The blood of a single one of my fellow citizens is more to me than that of all the peoples of the world.

Cazalès was obliged to stop ; violent murmurs, almost howls, stifled his voice. He was obliged to apologise for the heat and exaggeration of his discourse.

Of all the leaders "Mirabeau alone saw clearly ; he dispelled the fogs, tore away veils and for a moment revealed to the incredulous Assembly the strange and *fatal* future that the Revolution carried within it and that no one foresaw. He showed free peoples to be the most eager for war, and democracies more the slaves of their passions than the most absolute despotisms.

"I ask myself whether because we suddenly change our political system we shall force other nations to change theirs. . . . Until then perpetual peace will remain a dream and a dangerous dream if it leads France to disarm before a Europe in arms."

Nevertheless the resolution was passed :

The French nation will undertake no war with a view to conquest and will never employ its forces against the liberty of any people.

"This decree," says Sorel, "was voted amidst general enthusiasm. Platonic vow of a congress of metaphysicians speculating in the political void on the mysteries of perpetual peace . . . !"¹

Such was the prelude to one of the greatest wars of conquest the civilised world has ever seen—a war waged with a ferocity never displayed by the hitherto gallant troops of France, a war of aggression waged to force the hideous principles of Jacobinism on reluctant populations, and a war of brigandage, of pillage, rapine and destruction, which, in the words of a contemporary, "has no parallel even in the history of predatory hordes of barbarians."² So under the influence of "democracy" could the character of a great and chivalrous nation become temporarily transformed.

Throughout the nineteenth century continuous attempts were made to put an end to wars by leagues, conventions and so on ; space indeed forbids their enumeration. The most important and durable of these was The Hague Tribunal,

¹ Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, vol. ii, pp. 86-9.

² *France in 1802*, p. 153, by Redhead Yorke, who had formerly sympathised with the Revolution.

established in May 1899 on the initiative of the Tsar Nicholas II, who in the previous year had sent an appeal to the Powers of Europe for the reduction of armaments. At this first Conference the Powers agreed to do all they could to avert wars, by having recourse to mediation and arbitration. They also agreed to prohibit the discharge of bombs from balloons, the use of asphyxiating gases, etc.

At the second Hague Conference in 1907 a Convention was passed for the pacific settlement of international disputes, providing in detail for mediation by friendly Powers before an appeal to arms, also for arbitration by the Permanent Court at The Hague. At the same time neutral territory was declared inviolable, the bombardment of undefended towns was prohibited, and the regulations concerning bombardment from the air were confirmed.

The most extravagant hopes were entertained at the time as to the results of these agreements, but the Great War falsified them all. Regardless of previous undertakings Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium, guaranteed in 1839, and launched the first gas attack on April 22, 1915.

That in view of all these earlier experiments the League of Nations should have been proclaimed to the world as a new and brilliant idea can only be explained by the necessity of enlisting public support. In order to popularise any movement at the present day it is essential to present it as a novelty. That it should have been announced as a certain preventive to all future wars was part of the same game of advertisement. At best it could only be a great hope, not a rock to build on. But the pioneers of the League advanced with all the assurance of men who had at last found the germ of an inscrutable disease.

According to the official historians of the movement, the League of Nations was a sporadic growth arising—so the chart published by the League of Nations Union demonstrates—out of "Powerful Undefined Public Opinion of World in favour of a League of Nations." This shadowy progenitor gave birth to various British and American Leagues and schemes with which, from early in the War onwards, a number of prominent statesmen associated themselves: Sir Edward Grey and Lord Robert Cecil in England, Monsieur Léon Bourgeois in France, General Smuts in South Africa, ex-President Taft, and last but not least, President Woodrow Wilson, under the influence of Colonel E. M. House, Mr. Bernard Baruch, etc., in the United States.

In 1916 a Foreign Office committee was formed by Lord Robert Cecil under the chairmanship of Lord Phillimore to work out a plan which, by March 1918, was so far advanced that, although it had never been discussed in either House, a resolution in its favour was put forward by Lord Parmoor in the House of Lords on the 18th of that month. In view of the great German push which was just beginning on the Western Front, Lord Sydenham characterised the resolution as premature, and the House prudently contented themselves with commending it to the attention of His Majesty's Government.

Seven months later, on October 13, 1918, whilst the victorious armies of the Allies were rolling back the German legions towards the frontier, the League of Nations Union was formed with Lord Robert Cecil as Chairman and Professor Gilbert Murray (associated with strongly Pacifist movements such as the Union of Democratic Control, the No More War Movement and the National Council for the Prevention of War) as Vice-Chairman. The Executive was mainly composed of Liberals and Labourites whose policy throughout the War had been defeatist. Thus, even before the League itself came officially into existence, a rallying centre was provided for those whose principal concern at the moment of victory was to make use of the League in order to "let down Germany gently."

But by this time the movement had largely passed under the control of President Wilson. Already in January 1918 he had drawn up his German Peace Note containing his famous "Fourteen Points."

The second of these demanded the absolute "Freedom of the Seas," and the fourteenth the creation of the League of Nations. The former had found an advocate during the early days of the War in Sir Edward (now Lord) Grey and, as the *Morning Post* rightly pointed out at that time, the very phrase itself, "the Freedom of the Seas," was "coined in Germany for the sole purpose of passing that base currency in America. It means that Great Britain shall abandon the right to capture enemy property at sea—that and nothing else."¹ So that the power of Britain, already hampered until 1916 by the restrictions embodied in the Declaration of London, was to be further curtailed on her own initiative at the most critical moment of her existence.

This blow at the heart of Britain was dealt by President

¹ *Morning Post*, October 9, 1915.

Wilson whose Fourteen Points were read aloud to a meeting of Allied Statesmen at the Quai d'Orsay on October 29, 1918. To the protests of Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson replied in an ultimatum delivered by Colonel House: "I feel it my duty to authorise you to say that I cannot consent to take part in negotiations of a peace which does not include the Freedom of the Seas, because we are pledged to fight not only Prussian militarism but militarism everywhere."

So at the very moment of victory the Allies, who had borne the heat of the combat, were to submit to dictation by the representative of a Power that only at the eleventh hour had entered the lists; the soldiers of England, France and Belgium, who for four years had endured the horrors of the trenches and whose companions had perished by thousands in the fight, were to be told that it was they, not only the Prussian hordes, who presented a menace to civilisation, that it was the warrior spirit, not the spirit of aggression, that must be destroyed!

Posterity will ask with amazement how it was that this man, whose schemes failed to overcome the good sense of his own countrymen, should have been allowed to arrogate to himself the rôle of arbiter between the Allied and Central Powers, and finally to dictate the terms of peace. For although the clause relating to the Freedom of the Seas was not passed by the representatives of the Allies but only left open to discussion, it was the Fourteen Points of President Wilson which, with this one reservation, formed the basis of the Armistice terms.

The League of Nations Covenant was accepted at a plenary session of the Peace Conference on April 28, 1919. The counsels of President Wilson were again allowed to prevail in the matter of the Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28 of the same year, and including the Covenant of the League of Nations as its first twenty-six articles. With the ratification of the Treaty on January 10, 1920, the League began its official existence and held its first Council six days later.

This was, of course, the supreme error of the Allies which led to all the failures that henceforward attended every effort towards the restoration of Europe. To incorporate the Covenant of the League of Nations in the Peace Treaties was obviously to confuse issues from the outset. The province of these Treaties was to dictate the terms on which the Allies were prepared to lay down their arms, to formulate the conditions to be complied with by the enemy with regard to

frontiers, reparations, disarmament and other matters connected with the present war. To combine a practical plan of this kind with a purely speculative scheme for preventing all wars in future was obviously absurd. But the absurdity of the whole thing went further still. Part XIII, Section I, of the Treaty of Versailles, dealing with the International Labour Office to be instituted by the League, opens with the words :

Whereas the League of Nations has for its object the establishment of universal peace, and such a peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.

This is followed by an enumeration of all the social reforms to be carried out with regard to hours of labour, sickness amongst workers, provision for old age, etc.

So the Treaty concluded with the enemy at the end of a four years' war was not only to ensure perpetual peace but to embrace a vast scheme for the reformation of the whole world !

Had a League of Nations been instituted after the Treaties dealing with the issues of the War had been signed and complied with by the enemy, as an entirely separate organisation, it might have become a great force for peace, and Germany could have been invited to take part in it once she had shown real evidence of the pacific spirit with which she was accredited by her advocates.

This was, in fact, the idea of one of the first supporters of the League, Monsieur Léon Bourgeois, who had sketched out the plan in a book published as early as 1910, and who in 1916 expressly stated :

It is not a matter of establishing the League of Nations on the same day as the Peace Treaty ; we are already agreed that there should be three periods—the first : establishment of the Peace Treaty ; the second : execution of this treaty, a period during which we shall remain armed, and that until all the conditions of the Peace are fulfilled. Do not forget that amongst these conditions is the destruction of Prussian militarism. The limitation of German armaments must be one of the clauses imposed by the Peace Treaty. It is only after this second period that we contemplate the League of Nations coming into force.¹

This perfectly logical plan of procedure was, in fact, approximately the one adopted by the Peace Conference during

¹ Speech delivered by M. Léon Bourgeois at the meeting of the Comité National d'Etudes Politiques et Sociales, on November 13, 1916. Published in the collected speeches of M. Léon Bourgeois, *Le Pacte de 1919 et la Société des Nations*, pp. 13-14.

President Wilson's absence in America in the spring of 1919; unfortunately on his return the representatives of the Allies allowed themselves to be stampeded by this so-called "idealist" into a course contrary to their better judgment. Mr. R. B. Mowat, in his admirable book, *European Diplomacy 1914-1925*, has described the contest that took place over this point, and adds that Clemenceau in his efforts to overcome his well-founded doubts as to the wisdom of this premature acceptance of the League, is said to have repeated to himself each morning on waking: "Georges Clemenceau, you *do* believe in the League of Nations."¹

But though the Allies yielded, the United States remained unconvinced of the efficacy of President Wilson's panacea, and the Covenant of the League of Nations was finally rejected by the Senate in March 1920.

It is customary to excuse the failure of President Wilson on the score of "idealism." But to speak of Idealists in contradistinction to Realists is misleading. Realists are not necessarily devoid of ideals. The true difference is between Realists and Unrealists. It is not because they have ideals that impracticable dreamers are a danger, but because they will not face realities. President Wilson proved disastrous to the Peace Conference not because he indulged in dreams of universal peace, but because he chose a course directly contrary to their realisation, by playing into the hands of Germany. The way to ensure peace was to strengthen the hands of peace-loving nations. President Wilson set out to weaken them. By the action of these Unrealists the great hope of the Allies, formulated as "a just and lasting peace," was shattered. As a witty Frenchman observed whilst the Peace Conference was sitting in Paris: "*La Conférence de la Paix va nous donner une guerre juste et durable.*"

At the very moment of writing these words a leaflet reaches me from the Fichte Bund, concluding with these words:

The German people have, therefore, an indisputable claim and right to the cancellation of the Dictate of Versailles and to a peace of justice and righteousness, *corresponding to Wilson's conditions.* (My italics.)²

It is evident then that the schemes of the "Idealist" Wilson would have had very practical advantages for Germany had he been allowed still further to control the destinies of Europe.

¹ *European Diplomacy 1914-1925*, p. 143.

² Leaflet headed *Historic Facts and Faked War Guilt.*

As it was, they merely threw the councils of the Allies into hopeless confusion. From the moment of his intervention the great issues, that had seemed so clear throughout the War, were lost to sight. Sir Henry Wilson has described the amazing state of affairs on the day (May 7, 1919) that the Treaty of Versailles was handed to the Germans for signature.

As regards the Treaty itself, no one has ever seen it in its completed form, for it does not exist. Both Bonar Law and Smuts, who have been struggling to get completed copies, told me they had been unable; and both told me the whole thing was in a hopeless mess. . . . So that we are going to hand out terms to the Bosches without reading them ourselves. I don't think in all history this can be matched. . . . Lloyd George said that the Constitution of the League of Nations was a most "ridiculous and preposterous document." And the Treaty opens with the League! . . . I spoke to Bonar Law, Smuts, Borden, Massey and others, and they were all equally at sea and hopeless. I saw Bob Cecil and Hankey after, and they also agreed that the whole thing was terrible. I dined at the Embassy, a big party, A. J. B. [Balfour] there, and I spoke to him about the Terms, and he, of course, like the others, had not seen them. He was openly joking in front of the ladies, etc., about the farce of the whole thing—and yet he has to sign! ¹

But why had he to sign? What mysterious Power had reduced these apparently responsible and highly intelligent statesmen to impotence? What hypnotic spell prevented them from exercising their own powers of judgment at this most crucial moment? Posterity will ask these questions with amazement.

Sir Henry Wilson has been accused of inaccuracy, particularly by Mr. Lloyd George, who declared that many of the statements attributed to him in these Memoirs were never uttered. But allowing for all this, allowing for the possibility that neither Mr. Lloyd George nor his colleagues expressed themselves on this occasion with the force—and indeed the perspicacity—described by Sir Henry Wilson, one must admit in the light of after events that if such criticisms had been made they would have been amply justified.

For the Treaty of Versailles, whilst of enormous length and embracing every kind of social question irrelevant to the situation, omitted to define the exact conditions relating to those matters that demanded the most urgent attention—namely indemnities and security.

¹ *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, by Major-General Sir C. E. Callwell, vol. ii, p. 188.

The public is perhaps not generally aware that *the total amount Germany was to pay for the War was never stated in the Treaty of Versailles*. Clause 235 merely demanded that the sum of £1,000,000,000 in goods or gold should be paid in by May 1, 1921, but no indication was given of what Germany's further liabilities would be. It was not until two years later, on April 30, 1921, that the total sum of £6,600,000,000 was finally fixed, the payment of which, Germany, supported by international financiers summoned to her rescue, was able to evade. Compare this with the way Germany settled matters after the war of 1870. No protests then from the Powers of Europe, no conferences of international financiers to consider how France could be helped to pay. Instead, a harshly dictated Peace, a heavy indemnity, approved by International Finance and remorselessly exacted, which France, mustering all her resources, paid up in two years to the admiration of all Europe.

Why was this method of procedure not adopted by the Allies in 1919? The friends of Germany have never ceased to declare that the sums demanded of her were absolutely beyond her capacity to pay. But who was responsible for this? It is easy to see that to fix indemnities at a fantastic figure was to provide Germany with a pretext for evading payment, and to open the door to endless demands for revision. Why not have decided on a reasonable scale of reparations, from which there could have been no retreating? Such a course would have gone far to restore the financial and industrial equilibrium of Europe.

The failure to guarantee the security of France was another grave omission on the part of the Peace Conference. On March 14, 1919, a tri-partite pact—the "Guarantee Treaty of Security"—had been drawn up between England and the United States and France, by which the two former undertook to come to the rescue of France in case of unprovoked aggression on the part of Germany; this Treaty was signed by Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson and Monsieur Clemenceau on the same day as the Treaty of Versailles. But as the whole thing hinged on the League of Nations, which was subsequently turned down by the United States, the Guarantee Treaty of Security fell through, and France was left in complete uncertainty as to the future. The Treaty of Locarno, six years later, which placed her on an equal footing with Germany in the matter of defence against aggression, was poor compensation for the loss of a guarantee which should have been one of the first considerations of the Peace Conference.

As Sir Austen Chamberlain stated seven months before the Locarno Conference :

When Great Britain and the United States refused to ratify the Security Pact, they created insecurity in Europe. . . . To pacify France and allay her justified fears it is essential to give a measure of guarantee that her territory will not be invaded with impunity. . . . Britain must, therefore, be prepared to stand by the side of France in helping to find a stumbling way towards peace and prosperity.¹

But why a "stumbling way" ? Surely if this very obvious policy of standing by France had been adopted, or rather adhered to, at the end of the War, there would have been no need to stumble but only to march forward boldly and reap the fruits of victory in peace and security. It was thus owing to the darkening of counsels at Versailles in 1919 that the Allies found themselves six years later still groping to find a way out of their difficulties, like Dante and Virgil in the dark wood at the mouth of the Inferno.

* * * * *

In order to understand the difficulties that arose at the succeeding conferences of the Allies after the War, with regard to German reparations and disarmament, it is necessary to realise the state of affairs in Germany during this period.

As Monsieur Léon Bourgeois had stated in his programme referred to above, the second stage of operations to be carried out before the League of Nations could begin its work was the destruction of Prussian militarism. That Prussian militarism must be destroyed was a principle on which all the Allies were agreed—was it not the slogan on which the whole war had been fought ? But had this objective been attained ? How far was Germany disarmed either morally or physically ? In England a general opinion prevailed that the mere fact of defeat on the field of battle had had the desired effect, and Germany's friends eagerly asserted that she had now undergone that "change of heart" which rendered it possible to receive her immediately into the comity of nations. English travellers in Germany spoke enthusiastically of the cordial manner in which they had been received, and were ready to declare that the Germans were now our best friends. Newspapers which, like the *Morning Post* and *Daily Mail*, warned us that Germany was still a potential danger were denounced

¹ *Morning Post*, March 3, 1925.

as jingoistic. The tendency of the British public to believe what it wants to believe triumphed over the evidence of facts.

The French were not so optimistic. They, too, frequently met with cordial receptions beyond the Rhine and were assured that England alone was regarded as the enemy. But this attempt to drive in a wedge between the Allies was at first only partially successful. French public opinion in general was not swayed by these manoeuvres. To the French Germany was still the enemy, beaten only in the field, but unrepentant. The conduct of the German Delegates to the Peace Conference was not calculated to reassure them, and presented a marked contrast to the courteous attitude of the Allies. Any retaliation for the indignities heaped on France forty-nine years earlier was carefully avoided. At Versailles, in 1871, the triumphant Prussians, selecting the Palace of the Kings of France in which to dictate their terms as victors to the vanquished, had treated the French with the utmost harshness. On May 7, 1919, at Versailles, when the terms of the Peace Treaty were handed over, the representatives of the Allies, who had risen to receive the German delegates, allowed von Brockdorff-Rantzau to hold forth in his own tongue denying Germany's "war guilt" and bringing counter-accusations against the Allies. The French kept their tempers admirably. Rather than accept the terms of the Treaty the Government of Scheidemann, and with it von Brockdorff-Rantzau, went out of office. Their successors, Hermann Müller and Johannes Bell signed—but under duress.

For the terms of the Treaty included a recognition of Germany's war guilt. Article 231 runs as follows :

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

It has been objected, and with good reason, that this clause should not have been inserted in the Peace Treaty which, as a legal document, should have been confined to a statement of claims and not concerned itself with moral issues. To force Germany under pressure of military defeat to append her signature to a thesis she did not in her heart admit was to introduce an element of contention into the pact which was bound to lead to constant attempts to retrieve her position.

The recognition of Germany's responsibility for the War was not an essential accompaniment of her promise to fulfil the conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles; it was, however, in the highest degree essential to her admission to the League of Nations. Had this recognition, then, been embodied in an invitation to Germany to join the League so that it could have been either freely signed or rejected by her, Germany could have had no grievance against the Allies for the wording of the Treaty, and the issues would have been made quite clear. By signing in response to the League of Nations, not under compulsion, the rulers of the German Republic would have provided evidence that they repudiated the aggressive policy of their Imperial predecessors, and the Allies would have received the assurance that Germany had really undergone that "change of heart" her friends in this country attributed to her. Further, if this assurance had been accompanied by the evidence of a pacific spirit in Germany, the destruction of Prussian militarism might have been regarded as a *fait accompli*. On the other hand, by refusing to sign, Germany would have been forced to show her hand, and the League would have remained what it was intended to be—a League of Nations really desiring peace.

This would not have suited the pro-Germans and Socialists at all, who were for admitting Germany whether repentant or unrepentant to the League at the outset. For Germany, of course, would not have signed. The denial of "war guilt" was the first point in her policy. This thesis was actually included in the 1926 *Manual* for the Reichswehr issued by the German War Office where, in a section dealing with the Peace terms, it was stated that :

the moral basis of the Treaty—that Germany alone was responsible for the War—is false, for what in the course of the years brought about the War was French vindictiveness, Russian lust of conquest and British business interests.

The same point of view was upheld as energetically by German literary men and the clergy as by the military party. Indeed, the "War Guilt Lie" has been the theme of countless protests from 1919 up to the present day. The "Fichte Bund" of Hamburg, founded in 1914—of which the President was a certain Heinrich Kessemeier, editor of the *Waffen-schmied*, supported by a group including lawyers, professors and pastors—still continues to deluge the British public with leaflets proclaiming the innocence of Germany and the guilt

of the Allies. The little group of German Pacifists, composing the "Menschheit" group under Karl Mertens, who recognise the danger of Prussian militarism, not merely in the past but in the future, constitute only a small minority and have been subjected to relentless persecution. It is interesting to note that this group has met with little encouragement from Pacifists in this country, whose principal concern is to white-wash Germany, thereby assisting the military party—the surest way to bring another war upon the world.

So much then for the "moral disarmament" of Germany. Now for the question of physical disarmament.

Under the Treaty of Versailles the standing army of Germany, henceforth known as the Reichswehr, was limited to 100,000 men, but the number continued to be surpassed in spite of repeated protests from the Allies.

At the same time a number of illegal associations were formed in order to keep up military training; these were closely connected with the old pan-German secret societies that had existed long before the War. The most important amongst the latter was the Pan-German League, founded in 1890, of which an outcome was the secret society known as the Ostmarkenverein operating on the borders of Russia, nominally for protecting the interests of German settlers in Russia, but in reality financing various revolutionary movements in foreign countries.

Certain of these associations were of very ancient origin. Germany had always been a hot-bed of secret societies, some revolutionary in the democratic sense, but the greater number strongly Monarchist and using subversive propaganda abroad for the old German aim of world domination. Amongst the earlier of these were the Old Paladins, the Black Templars, Igdrasil, the Druidenorden, and others dating either from the early eighteenth century or even from the Middle Ages, and in some cases modelled directly on the Vehmgericht, the secret tribunals that spread terror throughout Germany from the ninth century onwards.

After the Great War the German Monarchists, being obliged to organise secretly, found these old societies of great value to their cause, and a number of new ones, constructed on the same lines, came into being. The first of these were the Eiserne Division (Iron Division) and the Baltikum; then came Captain Ehrhardt with his "Marine Brigade." The impetuosity of the leaders resulted in the premature "Kapp Putsch" of March 12, 1920, when Dr. Kapp of the Pan-German

League and a founder of the Vaterlandspartei, with General von Lüttwitz, Captain Ehrhardt and Colonel Bauer, with the aid of Ehrhardt's "Marine Brigade," seized the public buildings in Berlin and set up a dictatorship of their own. The Government of Ebert took to flight, and for three days the rebels held their own. But Ebert appealed for help to the Socialist leader, Otto Wels, who called a general strike which, by paralysing the means of communication and closing the banks, cut off the resources of the insurgents and brought the rebellion to an end.

This *coup d'état* produced a repercussion amongst the revolutionary elements which, under the banner of Spartacism, the German form of Bolshevism, had come to the fore in the risings of December 1918 in Berlin—when the Spartacists leaders Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg were lynched by Monarchists—and of March 1919 in Munich, where for three weeks the Spartacists gained the upper hand. The Kapp Putsch was followed by a rising amongst the half-starved workers in the Ruhr district, where a "Workers' Council" or Soviet and a Red Army were formed. The Government thereupon sent detachments of the Reichswehr into the Ruhr and suppressed the rising by force. Amongst the Reichswehr troops were the Schulz corps and the remnants of the Lichtschlag corps which had taken part in the Kapp Putsch. Thus the Government, after using the Socialist elements against the Monarchists, proceeded to use the Monarchists against the Communists.

But between these two extremes there seems to have been at moments a curious understanding. Both Communists and Monarchists alike believed in methods of violence, and both detested the Social Democrats who formed the Government. Thus Colonel Bauer, one of the leaders of the Kapp Putsch, after appealing, on March 18, 1920, through *The Times* to the British Government and the Entente for support in view of the Bolshevist menace on the eastern frontier, was stated on good authority to have approached the Spartacist leaders on the following day with a view to forming a Communist-Militarist dictatorship. The idea of co-operation with Soviet Russia in a war of revenge against the Allies became the settled policy of the so-called "Eastern school" of German Monarchists.¹

Meanwhile the German Government behaved with extreme leniency towards the authors of the Kapp Putsch, only one of

¹ *The Times*, May 7, 1929.

whom, von Jagow, was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The rest escaped, some to Hungary, where they joined the "Awakening Magyars," later to Bavaria, which now became the headquarters of the Monarchist movement. This was facilitated by the presence of armed forces, known as the "Einwohnerwehren," which had been formed to maintain law and order after the Spartacist rising of 1919. The "Einwohnerwehren," though ostensibly civil and non-political, were, however, intimately connected with the regular Reichswehr, which provided them with arms and transport. When at last this transparent method of supplementing the German army was prohibited by the Allies, the Einwohnerwehren broke up into a number of so-called "Fatherland Associations" grouped under the name of the V.V.V. (Vereinigten Vaterländischen Verbände) or United Leagues of the Fatherland, under the leadership of Professor Bauer, a pronounced anti-Semite. The most important of these was the *Orgesch*, or Organisation Escherich, a secret militia formed by Dr. Escherich, a moderate. From this sprang the *Orka*, or Organisation Kanzler, under the geometrician Kanzler, the *Orzentz*, or Organisation Zentz, and a host of others, some open, some secret. A list of these would occupy pages—by 1922 the number had reached three figures. Amongst the more important that may be quoted were the Verband Nationalgesinnter Soldaten (secret), later the Völkischer Soldatenbund, the Wehrwolf, the Bund der Aufrechten, or League of the Just (secret), the Schutz und Trutzbund (secret), the Deutsche Waffenring, the Ring der Nibelungen, the Bismarckbund, the Bund der Kaisertreuen (secret), the Frontbund, the Kleinkaliberschützen, the Silbernes Schild, which, as most of their names testify, were absolutely military organisations. The famous Stahlhelm had been founded earlier, immediately after the 1918 revolution, by Herr Franz Seldte, and though nominally suppressed on several occasions has continued its existence up to the present time.

The most dangerous of all these associations was the "Organisation C" (Organisation Consul), "der Herr Consul" being the pseudonym of Captain Ehrhardt. This Terrorist secret society was formed by him out of the remnant of his "Marine Brigade" after the Kapp Putsch. Attached to it was the "Klub der Harmlosen" (Club of the Harmless), with confidential agents all over the country, having for its object a war of revenge against France. Amongst its members were a number of really harmless people who had no idea of its true

aims. The head was nameless, being known only as "the General"—according to the habitual practice of the early German secret societies.

The series of political assassinations which took place in Germany from 1919 to 1922, amounting during the year 1921 to no less than 400, were the work of Organisation C and kindred associations. Amongst the victims of these murder gangs were Erzberger, assassinated on August 26, 1921; Scheidemann, on whom an unsuccessful attempt was made on June 4, 1922, and Rathenau, who met his death on June 24 of the same year.

Besides these secret societies and Leagues of the Fatherland, Germany had her "Black Army." The legal army, or Reichswehr, had, as was previously stated, been limited by the Treaty of Versailles to 100,000 men—a number that was continually exceeded. But when after the Kapp Putsch this reduction was enforced by the Allies, a careful selection was made by the monarchistically minded officers in command so that all Republicans were eliminated and only "right-minded men" (richtig Gesinnte), that is to say Monarchists, retained. So the anomaly was created that a Republican Government maintained a purely Monarchist army. But as there was not room for all the "right-minded" in the legal Reichswehr these were incorporated in leagues which formed the foundation for an illegal army, known as the "Black Reichswehr," organised on the same lines as the legal Reichswehr and actually working under its control. Its members thus kept up their military training and concealed arms in their houses. Amongst these were a number of completely organised and uniformed troops, living in barracks, exactly like the Reichswehr; these were known as "Stinnes Soldiers."

Such, then, was the state of affairs in Germany whilst the first Conferences of the Allies were taking place, and whilst people in England were declaring that Germany had now become completely demilitarised and presented no further danger to the world. Not only had a network of secret Monarchist societies been spread all over Germany, but also the Monarchist secret service had been preserved. This marvellous organisation had been created by Stieber just before the war of 1870, and continued to operate after the inauguration of the Republic on secret society lines. Germany since the War has thus possessed two secret services, one working for the Government, the other, deriving genealogically from the Ostmarkenverein and the old pan-German secret societies, working for the Hohenzollerns, though no longer

directed by the Kaiser, but by the Monarchist organisation in Munich.

In the light of these facts let us now return to the Peace Conference. It will then be seen whether the differences that occurred between the Allies arose from "French nervousness" or the disinclination of Mr. Lloyd George to face realities.

At the end of the War no one had been more anti-German than Mr. Lloyd George. During the General Election of 1918, playing on the feelings of the British public roused to indignation by Germany's treatment of prisoners and civil populations, Mr. Lloyd George had been all for hanging the Kaiser and bringing the "war criminals" to justice. At the same time he insisted that Germany must be made to pay. In his famous speech at Bristol in December he had declared :

We have an absolute right to demand the whole cost of the War from Germany. . . . They must pay to the uttermost farthing, and we shall search their pockets for it.

But only three months later, on March 25, 1919, twelve days after drawing up the Guarantee Pact for the security of France, with Clemenceau and President Wilson, he issued a Memorandum to the Peace Conference in which he pointed out the danger of throwing Germany into the arms of Bolshevism, therefore "we must do everything possible to enable the German people to get upon their legs again." Germany must not be given cause for resentment in the matter of territorial claims. To this Clemenceau logically replied that Germany was bound to feel resentment under any circumstances. The alarm created in England by this sudden *volte-face* was such that 370 members of Parliament wired to Mr. Lloyd George urging him to stand firm.¹

The question of "hanging the Kaiser" and bringing the "war criminals" to justice came up at the Conference held in London on February 12 of the following year (1920). But it was now suggested that instead of hanging the Kaiser, the Dutch Government should be asked to send him out of Europe, possibly to Java. The Dutch Government of course declined, and the Kaiser was allowed to settle down in perfect comfort at Doorn. As to the "war criminals," it was decided that they should not be tried by the Allies, but by the Germans themselves before the Court of Leipzig, with a view to giving Germany the opportunity to show sincere repentance for the

¹ *The Times*, April 9, 1919.

crimes committed in her name. As might have been expected, the Germans allowed three of the worst offenders to get out of the country, and imposed moderate sentences on fourteen unimportant ones.

The next Conference met at San Remo in April just after the Kapp Putsch, which had, not unreasonably, alarmed the French. When a fortnight later the Reichswehr, in direct contravention of the Treaty of Versailles, advanced into the Ruhr, the French sent troops to occupy Frankfurt and Darmstadt. At this very reasonable precaution Mr. Lloyd George saw fit to protest in a sharp Note, and when the Allies met at San Remo he made the startling proposal, which nearly wrecked the Conference, that the German Chancellor should be invited to take part in the discussions. At Spa, however, in the following July, when for the first time German delegates were invited to meet the Allied statesmen in conference, Mr. Lloyd George took them soundly to task for their failure to comply with the conditions of disarmament, rapped the table and replied to German evasions with a reminder that the Allies must insist on precision.

The next year he again took a firm line with regard to German reparations. In a speech at Birmingham on February 5, 1921, just after the Supreme Council had met in Paris to discuss this question, Mr. Lloyd George reverted almost to his General Election eloquence of 1918 :

Last week we put forward our bill and Germany does not like it. . . . If Germany is prosperous, she can pay and she must pay. . . . Germany can pay if she means to. She has not yet taxed herself to the level of Great Britain or France. . . . It is intolerable that the country that inflicted the damage and that, while it was inflicting the damage was escaping damage itself, should escape with a lighter burden, less taxation than the two countries that were victims of this wanton attack. And we cannot allow it. (Loud cheers.)

The rest of the sentence was lost in the uproarious cheers with which this part of the speech was greeted.

There are some who say that it was the old regime that was responsible for all that. That is not so. The whole German people were behind it, yes, even the Socialists. The Socialists of Germany, who pretended to be a bulwark of peace, supported every proposal, including the invasion of Belgium. . . . The German people were solid behind that enterprise in 1914 and if they had won would have gladly shared the booty.

Turning to France Mr. Lloyd George asked :

Who is to repair devastated France, destroyed by the German army? Is it the workmen of France, who simply protected their native land against the invader, and protected it with infinite heroism? (Cheers.)

The heroism of France is indescribable and the losses by France are terrible beyond human thought. . . . Is it right that that country, which suffered through the wrong of Germany in material life and suffering of every description—that that country should be overburdened with taxation, while Germany is to escape? (Cries of "No.") Our claim is a righteous one, and we must enforce it. (Loud cheers.)¹

This mood was still on Mr. Lloyd George at the London Conference a week or two later (February 21 to March 7, 1921), when he informed the German delegates present that if the Allies' terms were not complied with, they would employ sanctions by occupying the right bank of the Rhine. The German delegates, Simon and Stinnes, having declared their inability to pay the full amount demanded at the Paris Conference (i.e. £11,300,000,000 in forty-two annual payments), Mr. Lloyd George informed them that the sanctions would be put in force. Accordingly on March 8 the towns of Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Ruhrort were occupied by Allied troops.

Another Conference was arranged to take place in London on April 30, and before this Mr. Lloyd George assured Monsieur Briand of his complete agreement with the further plan of occupying the Ruhr, if Germany did not now comply with the terms imposed on her. Then at the Conference another mood seized him. Although a much smaller sum—a total indemnity of £6,600,000,000—was now fixed, Mr. Lloyd George insisted on giving the Germans several days' respite. *The Times* commenting on this *volte-face* observed that Mr. Lloyd George was "wrestling between his previous resolutions to march with the French and the menace contained in a letter signed by Mr. Asquith, Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Clynes pleading for that blessed word 'Moderation,' and advocating delay, consideration, mediation, anything indeed except the occupation of the Ruhr."² Germany, profiting by this sign of weakening, cleverly agreed to the Allies' terms, and at the end of the year, when the necessary sum was due, declared herself bankrupt and unable to pay.

Then in January 1922 came the Cannes Conference, during

¹ Report in *Sunday Times*, February 6, 1921.

² April 25, 1921.

which Mr. Lloyd George seemed to have recovered his former energy and handed a strongly pro-French memorandum to Monsieur Briand, with whom he now drew up a further Pact guaranteeing the security of France. This was, however, turned down by Mr. Asquith with the support of the Labour Party.

At Genoa, three months later, Mr. Lloyd George had weakened both towards the Germans and the Bolsheviks, as we shall see later. As Mr. Maxse wrote at the time, Mr. Lloyd George's villa during the six weeks of the Conference became a veritable anti-French camp.¹ The *Daily Chronicle* proclaimed, "The Entente in Peril at Genoa." Already on November 28, 1921, the *Daily Herald* had announced with satisfaction that the plan of an Anglo-German Entente was being studied at the Foreign Office and the Wilhelmstrasse.

Monsieur Clemenceau in his Memoirs has related how he once charged Mr. Lloyd George with being the enemy of France, to which Mr. Lloyd George contented himself with replying: "Well, was it not always our traditional policy?" This untrue and mischievous observation, in view of the sympathy felt for France by the overwhelming majority of the British people during and after the War, is in itself sufficient proof of the danger Mr. Lloyd George presented to the Allied cause. It has often been declared that he won the War, and this may be true, in so far that if Mr. Asquith had been allowed to remain in power we should probably have lost it. Having replaced him, Mr. Lloyd George's only chance of retaining his hold on the country was to pursue a more vigorous policy by giving the British forces the support they needed.

But even if Mr. Lloyd George had won the War, that was no reason why he should have been allowed to lose the Peace. And this was what, in conjunction with President Wilson, he was largely instrumental in doing.

The rift in the Entente created by Mr. Lloyd George was the supreme victory for Germany. On both sides of the Channel the public, misled by interested politicians and by the ceaseless and insidious propaganda of Germany, began to lose sight of the great issues that had stood out so clearly during the War. In England a section of the intelligentsia, but not the working-classes, talked of the unreasonableness of the French in contrast to the friendly spirit to be found in Germany.

For this the French themselves were partly to blame. Doubtless they had good cause for exasperation at the conduct

¹ *National Review*, June 1922.

of Mr. Lloyd George, and of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his fellow Pacifists, but *they* had had their Caillaux and their "Bolo," and more perhaps than any other nation had suffered from political intrigues. The folly of the French public was to vent their very natural feelings of indignation at Mr. Lloyd George on private individuals visiting France, just as in 1929 Conservatives who had done everything to keep out the Socialist Government, were made to pay for Mr. Snowden's insulting reference, in the House on April 17, to France "bilking her obligations." It is as if Monsieur Léon Daudet visiting England were to be hissed on account of the actions of Monsieur Briand. The British public has never made the mistake—committed generally on the Continent, not only by the French—of visiting the sins of foreign politicians on private individuals. This conduct on the part of the French people had the effect of alienating the sympathies of many English travellers.

What the French should have realised was that Mr. Lloyd George's policy was as disastrous to British as to French interests. It was not, as they imagined, the policy of Great Britain, but of a clique resolved on breaking the Entente and restoring Germany to her former commercial prosperity at the expense of British industry. It is also difficult to account for the enormous loans from London and New York poured into Germany for Government and municipal use, much of which went to perfect industrial plant, etc. Just as in the War, the presence of a Hidden Hand made itself felt. Unless there was some powerful influence in the background, it is impossible to understand the extraordinary muddle the politicians made of the Peace and the indulgence shown to Germany, not only by Mr. Lloyd George, but by the leaders of all three political parties.

The two questions of German reparations and French security formed the basis for nearly all the disputes that have taken place between the Powers since the War. If at the Peace Conference the security of France had been definitely assured as an issue of the first importance; if the total amount of Germany's indebtedness had been unalterably fixed at the same time, or even if the decision taken two years later had been adhered to, and Britain had resolutely stood by France in enforcing the conditions to which they had mutually agreed—the crisis which came very near to a rupture of the Entente need never have arisen, and the restoration of Europe could have proceeded peacefully.

But this would, of course, have deprived the politicians of many charming holidays, for they were always singularly happy in their choice of meeting-places. Posterity will read with bewilderment of the unending series of Conferences and committees that succeeded each other during the years following the Peace—San Remo, Lympne, Spa, Paris, London, Lympne again, Cannes, Genoa, The Hague, to mention only the principal Conferences that took place between 1920 and 1923, carried out with much blowing of trumpets and at vast expenditure. Palace Hotels, festive weeks in Paris with free motor runs and new frocks for the pretty secretaries who accompanied the delegations, languorous days amidst the palms and pine trees of the Riviera—all leading to what? Only to more Conferences and more committees.

The generous British public, struggling to adjust itself to heavy taxation, and to the increase in the cost of living that followed on the War, smiled patiently as it read in the papers accounts of the glorious treats for which it was paying; but France, which has never understood the British habit of taking one's pleasures sadly and one's troubles frivolously, was less indulgent and, declaring that she did not send Monsieur Briand to Cannes in order to play golf with Mr. Lloyd George but to discuss reparations and security, recalled the erring minister to Paris and replaced him by the less genial Monsieur Poincaré. It was with Monsieur Poincaré, therefore, that Mr. Lloyd George had to reckon at Genoa—but that is a story that must be reserved for a later chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

WHILST the representatives of the Powers debated under the cobalt skies of the Riviera, the League of Nations had laid out another pleasant playground for all those who wanted to take a hand in settling the affairs of Europe. Geneva, with its smiling lake and flowery mountain-sides, had always been a favourite resort of world reformers. The members of the First International had spent many happy days there planning the downfall of capitalism during the sixties of the last century, and it was again at Geneva that the Second International was reconstituted three months before the League of Nations took up its abode there.

Geneva thus provided not only the right geographical position as neutral territory for the League to hold its Assemblies, but the right atmosphere of Internationalism created by its predecessors in the planning of Utopias. Here, as at the Conferences of the Powers, no expense was spared. Magnificent palaces beside the blue waters of Lac Lemman were utilised to accommodate the enormous staff composing the Secretariat (the Palais des Nations), and also that of the International Labour Office decreed by the Treaty of Versailles¹ which was hailed by Mr. Tom Shaw at the aforesaid meeting of the Second International as "the greatest practical result achieved by international Socialism."²

What return has the League of Nations made for the vast expenditure incurred during the past ten years? The exact truth is difficult to ascertain, owing on the one hand to the extravagant claims put forward by its partisans, and on the other to the violent denunciations of its opponents. That it has been of use as an international civil service would be generally admitted. It has also provided the necessary machinery for giving Mandates, of which the success in certain cases has, how-

¹ Part XIII, Section I, arts. 387-411.

² *Morning Post*, August 7, 1920.

ever, proved of doubtful value. But against these achievements must be set the complications it has introduced into the affairs of Europe. The initial error of incorporating it in the Peace Treaties has never been retrieved. Owing to this confusion of issues at the outset, the League has been enabled to go far beyond its province and to act as a sort of power behind the throne. Instead of confining its activities to the prevention of future wars, it has served to weaken the decisions reached by the Allied Powers with regard to questions arising out of the past War. In this way it has provided Germany with a loophole for evasions by constituting a permanent Court of Appeal to which she could carry all her grievances instead of complying with the conditions imposed on her. It has further provided a permanent platform for international wrangles and for creating friction between the Allies. The quarrels that have taken place within the League itself have not been calculated to inspire confidence as to its ability to usher in the Millennium. These dissensions have always enlivened the deliberations of the advocates of universal brotherhood. Mr. Hyndman has described how at a Congress of French Socialists the fraternal delegates had to be housed in separate buildings lest they should come to blows.

The League of Nations, backed by the League of Nations Union, in which, in spite of the Conservatives figuring on its Executive, Socialist influence largely prevails, has fallen a prey to the same discords. Whether it has acted as an instrument for international peace is open to question. The League of Nations Union claims that the League has averted a dozen wars. How many of these wars would have been averted without its agency it is impossible to decide; we can all remember threats of wars that failed to materialise in the bad old days before the League existed. The League, at any rate, did not prevent the clash between Hungary and Roumania, between Poland and Lithuania, or between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Nor did it prevent the violation of the rights of peaceful populations, notably in the case of the subjugation of Georgia by the Bolsheviks, although Georgia, already a Socialist Republic, was officially recognised by the League and appealed to it to support its right to independence. Again, as we shall see later, it was powerless to abolish barbarous methods of warfare.

In the suppression of social evils the League claims to have accomplished a great deal, yet the international crook, the international drug vendor and the international white slave

trafficker still continue to ply their trades in spite of the expensive machinery set in motion for their detection.

To question the utility of the League of Nations is to-day a temerity which no leading statesman would dare to commit. Like "The Emperor's New Clothes" in Hans Andersen's story, it is necessary to praise it if one would prove oneself worthy of one's office. And the hosts of people for whom it provides lucrative employment and free trips to the Continent naturally swell the chorus of applause. But the plain citizen who cannot afford these treats for himself or his family, and who is forced to contribute to the ever-growing budget of the League, begins—like the child in the crowd who, as the Emperor passed by cried out, "But he has nothing on!"—to question whether there is anything in the League after all.

That twelve years after the War the representatives of the nations should still be quarrelling over reparations and disarmament is a situation surely unparalleled in history. But for the League of Nations all these questions must have been settled long ago. Has the confusion of issues perhaps a deeper cause than mere national antagonisms? In order to answer this question it is necessary to inquire into the source of inspiration which brought the League into being.

What was the true origin of the League of Nations? Strangely enough, although only twelve years have passed since its inception, this is a point on which nobody seems to be agreed. The general idea, as stated in the foregoing chapter, is that it started during the War with a group of Allied Statesmen, notably British and American, at first Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, later Lord Robert Cecil and President Wilson who became its principal sponsor. Even Mr. Winston Churchill also takes this view. "Thus," he writes, "the League of Nations was an Anglo-Saxon conception arising from the moral earnestness of persons of similar temperament on both sides of the Atlantic."¹

The Zionist leader, Mr. Nahum Sokolov, on the other hand, has declared that it was "a Jewish idea."² It might with more certainty be described as an essentially Masonic conception—Masonic, that is to say, in the sense of Grand Orient Freemasonry.

In the light of previous history and of subsequent events, it will be seen that behind the League, and possibly unknown

¹ *The World Crisis: the Aftermath*, p. 147.
New York Times, August 28, 1922.

to its founders, there lay a deeper purpose than the settlement of international questions and the maintenance of peace. This purpose was expressed in the old Masonic formulas, "The United States of Europe" and "The Universal Republic." Let us follow the genealogy of this idea.

The scheme of a Universal Republic was embodied in the oath of the great secret society, the Illuminati of Bavaria, founded in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt. The initiates swore to contribute by all means in their power "to avenge the people for the oppression under which they were held by princes and the great ones of the earth, and to found a Universal Republic."¹

The book, bearing the title *La République Universelle*, by the Prussian Illuminatus, Anacharsis Clootz, in 1793, contains nearly all the ideas regarded as progressive by modern Internationalists. Clootz, who described himself variously as "the Orator of the Human Race" and the "personal enemy of Jesus Christ," set out to show that all troubles arose from the separate existence of nations, which led to quarrels, jealousies and wars carried out by "those murderers called soldiers."

All these evils were produced by a belief in God, and Clootz agreed with "the wise and profound Hobbes" in saying that "a magistrate who put forward the idea of God in a Republic of Atheists would be a bad citizen."

"The People," said Clootz, "is the Sovereign and the God of the world . . . only fools can believe in another God, in a Supreme Being."

The Sovereign Peoples were, then, to be welded into one by the abolition of nationality. French, English, Germans were to cease to exist as separate entities. "The human race will live in peace when it forms only one body, the ONLY NATION" (*La Nation Unique*). Elsewhere Clootz observed:

The Universe will form one State, the State of United Individuals, the immutable Empire of the Great Germany, the Universal Republic.²

Clootz suggested that the name "French" should be abolished in favour of "Germains" signifying "brothers."³ Again:

When the Tower of London falls like the Tower of Paris (the Bastille) it will be all over with tyrants. All the peoples forming

¹ Danican, *Le Fléau des Tyrans* (1797), p. 92.

² Speech of Clootz to the Assembly, September 9, 1792.

³ Speech to the Assembly, April 26, 1793.

only one nation, all the trades forming only one trade, all interests forming only one interest.¹

This project for the abolition of tariffs had been mentioned by Mirabeau as part of the plan of the Illuminati, who wished to do away with "all the corporations (i.e. working-men's guilds), all the maîtrises, all the burdens imposed on industry and commerce by customs, excise duties and taxes."²

After the permeation of French Freemasonry by the Illuminati, the idea of the Universal Republic became the slogan of the lodges and the abolition of all frontiers, nationalities and differences of language and religion constituted the doctrine of the Grand Orient.

It was towards 1850 that a modified form of this scheme became known as the "United States of Europe." The actual formula seems first to have been used publicly by Victor Hugo in his opening speech to the Peace Congress held in Paris in 1849,³ but it was not until some years later that it was formally adopted as the slogan of International Socialism.

The impulse came again from the Masonic lodges. In 1866 a Freemason named Santallier composed a work on Pacifism for his brother Masons which led to the founding of the Union de la Paix, under the presidency of another Freemason, a German-Jew named Bielefeld.⁴ The movement spread to Switzerland and on September 5, 1867, a further Congress was held. The proceedings were enlivened by a duel between the Constitutionalists and the Socialists, who declared that kings, soldiers—and some added priests—must be swept away in order to make room for the new Federation of Republics. The Socialists, led by Emile Acolas, won the day; Dupont, Karl Marx's right hand, was invited to represent the First International, of which he was secretary. Longuet, Marx's son-in-law, also attended. It was finally decided to found a "League of Peace and Liberty," with a Franco-German periodical, entitled *Les Etats Unis de l'Europe*, as its organ. This association, the "Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la

¹ *L'Orateur du Genre Humain*, p. 139.

² *Histoire de la Monarchie prussienne*, vol. v, p. 99. See also the memoir drawn up "by the Freemason Mirabeau" in 1776 mentioned in *Mémoires de Mirabeau écrits par lui-même*, vol. iii, p. 47.

³ "Un jour viendra ou l'on verra ces deux groupes immenses, les Etats Unis d'Amérique, les Etats Unis d'Europe . . . se tendant la main par dessus les mers."—Discours d'ouverture du Congrès de la Paix, 21 août 1849. Victor Hugo, *Œuvres, Actes et Paroles*, vol. i, p. 480 (1882 edition).

⁴ Georges Goyau, *L'Idée de Patrie et de l'Humanitarisme*, p. 67.

Liberté," still exists and publishes its paper. The headquarters are at Berne; the Vice-Chairman is Monsieur Guebin in Paris, and the Secretary is Monsieur G. Chaver at Lille.

The League, however, did not succeed in averting the Franco-Prussian War. Nor did further attempts along the same lines avert the Great War of 1914-18.

The prime mover in one of the latter was the late Sir Max Waechter, a friend of the Kaiser, who in 1909 delivered a lecture before the London Institute in which, in the interests of world peace, he suggested a scheme for the federation of the States of Europe, on the model of the United States of America, with a system of free trade and free intercourse throughout the Continent.¹

This scheme finally materialised in 1913 under the name of the "European Unity League," with a membership of 20,000 and a general council which included 48 peers, 51 admirals, 52 generals, and 62 Members of Parliament, including Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. "The Great War," says the *Morning Post*, "naturally destroyed the scheme."

Undaunted by this setback, Sir Max Waechter returned to the charge after the War was over, and published a manifesto in the *Morning Post* of April 28, 1924—the fifth anniversary of the official acceptance of the League of Nations Covenant by the Peace Conference at Versailles. The manifesto, which occupied a whole page of the paper and was headed with the words "The United States of Europe" in enormous lettering, describes its author's pre-war campaign and the sympathy accorded to it both by King Edward VII and the Kaiser.

The German Emperor showed in every way that he thoroughly approved of my plan, but I could not induce him to take action. He was by nature a pacifist, but unfortunately he was constantly surrounded and influenced by the War Party, and could not see his way to break with them.

Sir Max Waechter then goes on to say that as five years have now passed since the Armistice and Europe is still unsettled, he is resolved to bring forward once more his scheme of a United States of Europe in order to consolidate the position of the League of Nations, which he does not consider to be powerful enough to secure international peace. Besides, Germany and Russia have not yet been admitted, whilst there is little chance of the United States coming in as long as

the Republican Party is in power. The scheme he therefore proposes is as follows :

All the States should meet and draw up the Constitution of the Federation on the basis of one tariff, one coinage and one language which should be taught in every school as a second language. The choice of this language to be adopted would be decided by the first European Parliament.

The abolition of frontiers and Free Intercourse between the States.

The Presidency of the Federation to be held by the Great Powers in rotation, whether monarchies or republics.

Compare this programme with Cloutz's plan of "all peoples forming only one nation, all the trades forming only one trade, all interests forming only one interest," and with the programme of Grand Orient Freemasonry as given by one of its leading exponents :

It is to Masonry [says Ragon] that we owe the affiliation of all classes of society; it alone could bring about this fusion, which from its midst has passed into the life of the peoples. It alone could promulgate that humanitarian law of which the rising activity, tending to a great social uniformity, leads to the fusion of races, of different classes, of morals, codes, customs, languages, fashions, money and measures. Its virtuous propaganda will become the humanitarian law of all consciences.¹

The reference in Sir Max Waechter's manifesto to one language that should be taught in the schools as a second language is also interesting. The idea of a universal language that should replace all others had long been current in the Masonic lodges, and the study of Esperanto has been carried out under the auspices of the three Masonic powers of France as a preliminary to this design.

It is impossible to believe that the family likeness between the two programmes, together with the adoption of the same formula of the "United States of Europe," was purely accidental. This is not to say that Sir Max Waechter was consciously putting forward a Masonic plan. It is a usual procedure with secret societies to find a rich or powerful personage to act as their mouthpiece, who frequently ends by believing that the ideas suggested to him originated in his own brain.

Was this the case with the founders of the League of Nations? Was President Wilson, in fathering the scheme,

¹ J. M. Ragon, *Cours philosophique . . . des Initiations*, p. 52.

consciously acting in obedience to the dictates of Continental Freemasonry ?

According to a French Catholic publication that appeared in 1919,¹ President Wilson, who was a Freemason, was supported by the French lodges. This brochure relates that at one of these, *La Fidélité*, a discourse was given on "The end of secret diplomacy through the policy of our F.: President Wilson" on November 10, 1918, and that a few weeks later the *Comité de Vigilance et d'Action Maçonnique* of Algiers cabled to their "illustrious Brother Wilson their most fraternal homage and congratulations on his Masonic work in the War for the rights and liberties of the people"—to which the secretary of President Wilson replied with thanks.

At any rate, the League of Nations was entirely in line with the Masonic plan, as will be seen from the following extracts from the minutes of the Lodges :

The F.: Nathan-Larrier, Grand Orator, shows how he conceives the rôle of Freemasonry for the definite formation of the League of Nations. (*Bulletin Officiel de la Grande Loge de France*, 1920, pp. 34, 35.)

The League of Nations that we desire will have the more real moral force and influence over the peoples in that it will be able to find support in the Masonic groups all over the world. (*Vœu de la Grande Loge de France*, 1923, p. 97.)

It is the duty of universal Freemasonry to give its full support to the League of Nations so that it shall not be subjected to the interested influences of governments. (*Convention of the Grand Orient of France*, 1923, p. 23.)

The Convention draws attention to the International Masonic Federation for the League of Nations. (*Convention of the Grande Loge de France*, 1922, p. 236.)

In 1922 the Grande Loge de France enumerated as amongst its tasks, "the abolition of secret diplomacy, the application of the right of the peoples to decide for themselves—i.e. 'self-determination'—the establishment of commercial relations inspired by the principle of free-trade . . . the extension of a general pacifist education based notably on the extension of a universal language . . . the creation of a European spirit, in a word the formation of the United States of Europe,

¹ *Le F.: Wilson, son œuvre maçonnique*, Bureaux de la Foi Catholique, 25 rue Vaneau, Paris.

or rather a Federation of the World." (*Convention of the Grande Loge de France, 1922, pp. 235, 236.*)

According to the German-Jewish writer, Emil Ludwig (né Cohn), President Wilson in helping to form the League was consciously working for the United States of Europe. "In the future," Ludwig wrote in his book *Genius and Character*, "when the United States of Europe becomes a reality, people will call Woodrow Wilson its founder." And Ludwig's reviewer in the *Sunday Times*, Mr. Gerald Barry, adds :

Between the man Wilson and the man Lenin a remarkable similarity is discoverable. Both were idealists ; both had the same dream. That dream was the United States of Europe.¹

But in their conceptions of what the United States of Europe should be, the various advocates of the scheme have differed fundamentally. Whilst the uninitiated have been content to accept it on its face value as a Federation of European States formed to maintain common interests and to ensure peace, the world revolutionaries have seen it in its Masonic significance as the first step towards their real goal—the Universal Republic. It was in the latter sense that it was accepted by Lenin, who wrote in No. 40 of the Russian organ *The Social Democrat* in 1915 :

The United States of the World (and not only of Europe) that is the state formula of the union, and of the liberty of nations which we attach to Socialism, until the day when the complete victory of Communism will bring about the definite disappearance of every State, even purely democratic.

If this was the ideal that President Wilson shared with Lenin, those of us who viewed his intervention in the affairs of Europe with misgivings can hardly be accused of undue anxiety.

At the same time Trotsky in a series of articles which he contributed in 1915-16 to the organ of the Russian revolutionaries, *Nashe Slovo*, published in Paris, set forth at length his ideas on the scheme. "*The United States of Europe*," he wrote, "is the motto of the revolutionary age into which we have emerged."² Eight years later, in the *Communist Review* (monthly organ of the C.P.G.B.) for October 1923, he said

¹ *Sunday Times*, November 20, 1927.

² Reprinted in Petrograd in February 1918 as a pamphlet entitled, *What is a Peace Programme?*

again: "The United States of Europe should be the new slogan of the Communists"; and he proposed the formation of a Federative Union of Europe, to which the Soviet Union would adhere. Whether Great Britain could be included in this "depended on the pace at which her revolutionary development proceeded."

This was again the view generally taken by the *Clarté* group which came into existence under the leadership of the defeatist Barbusse in 1919, and formed a lodge under the Grand Orient of France. Trotsky is said to have been a member of this group. Anatole France, once a patriot, later an Internationalist and intellectual Communist, also belonged to *Clarté*, and wrote in the same vein of the United States of Europe:

The separate nations will come to an end, and they will, in all probability, be replaced by the United States of Europe, the Republic of the World.¹

The modern disciple of Anacharsis Clootz, Mr. H. G. Wells, put forward the same idea under the name of a "World State," which he appeared to think he had invented, in a series of articles that appeared in 1921. In 1930 he made a further discovery:

The French . . . begin to talk of the United States of Europe. That is a gleam of sanity in European political thought.²

"Begin to talk about it!"—when, as we have seen, they were talking about it more than fifty years ago!

The Theosophical Society, which in this country follows much the same political programme as the Grand Orient in France, was naturally sympathetic to the scheme and also appears to have claimed it as its own idea. In an address to the Esoteric School—that is to say, the innermost circle which forms a secret society to which only the real initiates are admitted—Miss Esther Bright in 1923 declared that "the hearty and understanding co-operation between E.S.T. members of many nations will form a nucleus upon which the nations may build the big brotherhood which we hope may become the United States of Europe. United States! What a fine sound it has when one looks at the Europe of to-day!"³

It is amusing to notice how in each case the advocates of the scheme propound it with all the air of a discovery.

But there is a further category in which the supporters of the

¹ Quoted in the *Daily Herald*, August 19, 1927.

² *Daily Herald*, March 17, 1930.

³ *The Patriot*, March 22, 1923.

United States of Europe may be placed, namely those who are content to confine the scheme to Europe, provided German influence is allowed to predominate.

This was clearly the aim pursued by Joseph Caillaux, who as Minister of Finance, was convicted of private negotiations with the Wilhelmstrasse during the Agadir crisis of 1911, and again in 1920 of treasonable communication with the enemy during the War—an accusation which led to his five years' banishment from France.

Amongst the incriminating documents discovered in the secret safe he kept in Florence, was a plan for the United States of Europe which formed one of the principal charges against him. After his return to France in 1925, he contributed an article to the *Neue Freie Presse* of April 12, again advocating the plan. This was followed by an article to the same effect in the *Neue Freie Presse* of July 1, 1925, from the pen of Count Richard Coudenhove Kalergi, who, in the following year, founded the Pan-Europa movement. At the first conference of this new movement held in Vienna in October 1926, the plan of a United States of Europe was put forward, from which Great Britain, as well as Russia, was to be excluded.

The idea was evidently so favourable to Germany that it was taken up by Germans and their friends everywhere. Count Kayserling developed it in his book *Europe*, which appeared in 1928.

It was again the plan of a United States of Europe that appears to have caused Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to revise his opinion of the League of Nations, which he at first regarded as not sufficiently revolutionary in its aims. Writing in the *Labour Leader*, organ of the I.L.P., on December 14, 1916, he had said :

If this war ends with a League of Nations to enforce Peace—a vain and grandiloquent title, which shows that from our Socialist point of view, at any rate, the promoters and godfathers of the movement do not even know what peace means—its result in this respect is to be of a most meagrely pauper kind. If it ends without having sown the seeds of the destruction of all the governing castes of Europe, it will be like a child's castle built on the wet sands at low tide. . . . This war, therefore, proves the necessity of ending for ever the international political system of Europe, and the putting in its place a system based upon democratic control, open diplomacy and the internationalism of our Socialism. This cannot be done with any effectiveness whilst we have armies and armaments.

But later, when the idea of the United States of Europe gradually emerged from the background of the League of Nations, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was ready to give the latter his blessing. "At last, after three or four centuries," he wrote in 1927, "Europe has the opportunity of peace presented to it by the League of Nations." Abandoning the scheme of one system of democratic control for the whole of Europe, he now insisted on the necessity for the most individualistic governments for the various States. "The United States of Europe," he wrote in an article under this heading,¹ "therefore cannot be a Federation with a common Parliament or anything of that kind. The self-government of the States must be placed beyond dispute. Whatever Common Council may be created, it must have no power to deal with internal questions. It must take the sovereign States as they are; its sole concern must be with their external relations and particularly with their disputes which may lead to fights. . . . This conception was brought to a point, never previously reached, in the Protocol of the League of Nations of 1924. Here the 'United States of Europe' received a form which was practical and satisfied modern conditions."

The one thing that can be said of the famous "Geneva Protocol" of 1924 is that it satisfied the enemies of the British Empire.

It is clear that from whatever point of view the plan of a United States of Europe is approached, whether as the first step to the Universal Republic, or as a means for establishing German hegemony on the Continent, it can only be fatal to British interests. But such is the amazing ignorance which prevails in this country with regard to the inner significance of events that when, on September 5, 1929, Monsieur Briand came out boldly with the proposal to the League of Nations to set about forming the United States of Europe, the past history of the scheme appears to have been almost entirely forgotten, and the idea was hailed as a brilliant inspiration on the part of Monsieur Briand himself. "Monsieur Briand," the *Morning Post* relates, "himself referred to this idea as germinating as it were in the background of his mind. Surprise came when the French Premier declared that the United States of Europe should not be purely economic in character. He thought that there ought to be some federal link of a political and social order. . . . He threw out a challenge in suggesting that the various representatives of European States should

¹ In the *Evening News* of September 9, 1927.

unofficially consider and study the suggestion in order that it might be translated into reality at the next Year's Assembly. The idea of creating a United States of Europe in a twelve-month took away the breath of most delegates."¹

So the real secret of the League of Nations founded by the Freemason Wilson was out at last—proclaimed by the Freemason Briand—yet no one was any the wiser, no one perceived whither they were being led.

The comments of the British Press were characteristic of the *naïveté* with regard to European movements prevailing in this country. The *Morning Post* announced it as "Monsieur Briand's Great Ideal." The *Daily Herald*, however, observed that the project was not new, having been heard of frequently during the past ten (!) years; it thought the idea came originally from President Masaryk. The *Evening Standard* was still better informed and adopted a most superior attitude: "I am amused," wrote "the Londoner," "at the astute propaganda which in every newspaper in this country describes the scheme for a United States of Europe as Monsieur Briand's plan. As a matter of fact, the plan has been in existence ever since 1919. It came from the fertile brain of Count Richard Coudenhove . . . founder and President of the Pan-Europa movement." The *Times*, which found the idea "attractive," also seemed disposed to attribute it to Count Coudenhove Kalergi. Of the 140-year-old history of the idea, nobody apparently had any conception. And nobody in consequence quite knew how to take it. Thus, although "Pertinax" of the *Echo de Paris* well described it as "the programme of the Second International which is also the programme of the German revenge," the *Daily Herald* of September 10, 1929, characterised it as a "grotesque conception," apparently because it was not to be extended to the whole world.

A useful critique of the scheme appeared, however, in *The Times Trade and Engineering Supplement* of October 26, 1929, which whilst accepting it purely on its face value and scenting no intrigues behind it, expressed anxiety as to the effects of such a project on Great Britain. "There will arise," it pointed out, "the question of what nation and what personalities are to dominate such an economic unit [the United States of Europe], for some form of domination there must inevitably be." Taking all factors into consideration, it seemed probable that "Germany will reassume a position of industrial supremacy in Europe." Further, it was difficult to reconcile the scheme

¹ *Morning Post*, September 6, 1929.

with Britain's imperial interests. "Complications would arise when the stage was reached at which Great Britain desired to participate in the new advantages to be gained from trading with a European *bloc* on the favourable terms agreed upon by the signatories to the Customs truce, and yet was obliged to safeguard her position as the centre of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The retention of her Empire markets is of vital importance to Great Britain. . . . The problem which may face Great Britain is how she can retain the advantages of the preferential tariff treatment granted by Empire countries and yet be a party to the new collective commercial agreements which are likely to result from the establishment of a Customs truce."

If the League of Nations is composed of people animated by all the divergent aims indicated in this chapter, as well as by the mass of harmless idealists who honestly see in it a great hope for the future of mankind, what wonder that so much confusion should have been introduced into its councils.

Monsieur Briand has not renounced his intention of pressing his scheme for a "United States of Europe" on the League. This being so, it behoves every Briton to understand what the scheme implies. Is it proposed merely to institute a peaceful United States of Europe *à la Henri IV* for the restoration of Europe's economic and financial conditions? Or is it to be a United States of Europe as the first step to the Universal Republic with Moscow as its capital? Or again a Europe under the industrial hegemony of Germany? It would be well to obtain a clear answer to these questions before it is too late.

But it is time to pass from the German question to the menace of Bolshevism, which had been steadily growing in force whilst projects for eternal peace were under discussion.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF BOLSHEVISM

WHEN the Russian Revolution of March 1917 burst upon the world it found both Press and public of Western Europe in almost total ignorance of its real meaning and purpose. Even by the most Conservative journals in this country it was hailed as the dawn of a new era for Russia which must contribute powerfully to her value as an ally. The pro-Germanism that prevailed in certain circles of Russian society had led to the idea that the Russian Court was wholly permeated with German influences and, therefore, that the fall of the monarchy would remove all obstacles to the Allied cause and bring the War speedily to a victorious end.

Only a year earlier, when the question of Mr. Asquith's removal from the Premiership was agitating this country, the one objection habitually raised was the danger of "changing horses in the middle of a stream." Yet no one seemed to remember this axiom when it became a question of changing the whole government of the Russian Empire, of overthrowing every national institution and replacing them by a band of untried revolutionaries, in the middle of the greatest war in history. The fact is that propaganda had been carried on so long and systematically against "Tsarist Russia"—by the Jews before the War and by the Germans whilst it was in progress—that a totally false conception of conditions in Russia had been created.

It may therefore be of interest to quote some extracts from an account of pre-war Russia given by Mr. Stephen Graham in 1915. As this article appeared in the *Herald*, later to become the *Daily Herald*, it can hardly be suspected of monarchist bias, nor does it appear to have met at the time with any refutation.

I would like to make an appeal to readers of this article to give Russia their attention, read Russian books and try to get some

understanding of the life of this great people. It is by no means the sort of life that pro-Germans in this country would like you to believe. It is above all things a peaceful, happy life.

There is, for instance, much less crime in Russia than there is in other countries; for one murder in Russia there are ten in the United States of America, and . . . except under martial law, there is no capital punishment in Russia. . . .

We hear a great deal of the troubles of Poland and Finland, and the Russian revolutionaries of the great cities, but lose sight of the vast peace of the great Russian nation. We need to get into perspective for Russia.

But even as regards the Russian Government there is no need for pessimism in this country. Many people hold that the Government is steadily reactionary. That is merely the parrot-cry of the enemies of Russia. The Russian Government tends to become steadily more and more representative of the Russian people. . . .

Alexander II . . . drew up . . . a constitution, the draft of which was in his pocket waiting for signature, when he was blown to bits by revolutionaries. The Russians waited forty years for a Duma; but they got it then, and the Duma is to-day an established Russian institution, which will probably overtake our own House of Commons in effectiveness. . . .

Throughout the winter the Germans have made ceaseless efforts to detach the Russians from the alliance with France and England; but the Russian Government has remained as staunch a friend of our Government as the Russian people is of our people. In this chain of great events and circumstances it is possible to see the way Russia is moving and what a good and splendid thing our friendship with her is both for us and her.¹

This may be a "rosy view," but it must at any rate be admitted that the writer was a man who knew Russia intimately and the historical facts he quotes admit of no dispute. The schools, crèches, hospitals and other institutions of which the Bolsheviks boast are no innovation, but existed under far better conditions in pre-war Russia. The care and devotion shown to the wounded by the women of the Russian Court and Royal Family throughout the War were unsurpassed in any country.

That there was an absence of liberty everyone will admit. But who has yet succeeded in giving liberty to Russia? Certainly not the Social Revolutionaries who made the Revolution of March 1917; still less the Bolsheviks who overthrew them in the following November. It has yet to be demonstrated that the average Russian is an individual who can live under a free government. The Baron d'Herberstein, ambassador

¹*Herald*, April 3, 1915.

from the Emperor Maximilian I to the Tsar Vassili IV in the beginning of the sixteenth century, had asked the question, whether it was autocracy that had made the Russian character or the Russian character that had made autocracy. The "people" of Russia had shown little impatience at the restrictions placed on their liberty. Essentially fatalists, they submitted to their worst despots and even became attached to them. When Ivan the Terrible, whose atrocities had incensed his nobles, offered to abdicate, it was the "people" who begged him to remain. The revolutionary spirit was almost entirely confined to the nobility and intelligentsia. It was they who helped to prepare the revolution of March 1917, the intellectuals as active revolutionaries and the upper classes as "frondeurs" openly criticising the Court and Government. Gustave le Bon truly observed that revolutions always come from above. "The people may make riots but never revolutions." The ruling class of a country can never be destroyed unless it concurs in its own destruction.

Revolutionaries of this type have always existed since the days of Catiline, but more particularly since the French Revolution, when the aristocrats and literary men of France set the fashion of blowing up the social system to which they owed their existence. The Russian writers and nobles of the Kropotkin breed were busy digging their own graves with their pens long before they dug them with spades under the direction of a Red Army firing squad.

England has not been behind other countries in producing these temperamental subversives whom one can only describe as Illuminati, animated by the vague desire to do away with the whole existing order without having any very definite idea of what they mean to put in its place. These Englishmen naturally sympathise with foreign revolutionaries, and earn for England the unmerited reputation of encouraging agitation abroad for the purpose of her own Imperial interests.

A typical example of this kind of Illuminatus was that extraordinary person the late Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who in his *Diary*, published in 1920, relates with complacency that he is sending money to Russian anarchists. Under the date of February 19, 1905, he writes :

George Meredith has been appealing for funds to help the Revolution in Russia, and I have subscribed £10, and yesterday came news that the Grand Duke Serge had been blown up with a bomb, so I am subscribing again. Assassination is the only way of fighting a despotism like that of Russia.

Any Russian reading this atrocious admission would naturally conclude that here was very definite evidence of England's perfidy. But let him read a little further and he will find Mr. Blunt rejoicing equally over the murder of the inoffensive Sir Curzon Wyllie by an Indian fanatic. "No Christian martyr," he says of Dingra, "ever faced his judges more fearlessly or with greater dignity."

This man, living in luxury and enjoying all the security of British rule, an anti-Socialist moreover, found his greatest pleasure in encouraging all England's enemies. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who "had expressed a wish to make his acquaintance," he finds "sufficiently anti-Imperialist" to win his approval. Theodore Rothstein, the Russian Jew who was later to play a leading part in the Bolshevist movement in Great Britain, and who was then intriguing against British rule in Egypt, was one of his particular allies. Brailsford also gained his sympathy by his support of the Egyptian Nationalists.

The atmosphere these sort of people succeeded in creating with regard to Russia was naturally favourable to the revolution of March 1917. Even the British ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, whilst in no way to be described as an Illuminatus, could not help falling partially under the spell. Thus, although he observes that the Russian soldier "was ready formerly to lay down his life for the Tsar who in his eyes impersonated Russia; but now that the Tsar has gone Russia means nothing to him beyond his own village," he nevertheless admits that at the urgent entreaty of Mr. Hugh Walpole, he declared at public meetings that he was "whole-heartedly on the side of the revolution."

This line of conduct gave an opportunity to Princess Paley and other Russian Monarchists to say that Great Britain in the person of Sir George Buchanan had engineered the Revolution in order to weaken Russia. But what possible object could the British Government have in weakening an ally at the very moment when it most needed that ally's support?

Clearly Sir George Buchanan, like many other people including loyal Russians themselves, honestly believed that the Revolution would be for the good of Russia. Even Koltchak in a speech on May 21 spoke of "the good effects of the Revolution." It would have been, however, more discreet on the part of a foreign ambassador to refrain from expressions of sympathy with a rising that had involved the overthrow of the Monarchy and the abdication of his Sovereign's cousin. As the

representative of His Britannic Majesty, Sir George Buchanan should surely have maintained that, in the words of Joseph II, "*mon métier est d'être royaliste.*"

Like many an Englishman in public life, Sir George Buchanan had little power of gauging the potentialities of a situation. Although the Provisional Government, established under Prince Lvov on the outbreak of the Revolution (March 11, 1917) was Constitutional and pro-Ally, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, created a few days earlier, formed a rival government comprising strongly revolutionary elements that threatened at every turn to overthrow law and order. From the outset, therefore, there was no security.

Moreover, the result of this seizure of power by the Soviet was to produce a violent repercussion in the west of Europe. In May the International Socialist Bureau at Stockholm—which carried on the work of the Second International until its official reorganisation in 1920—sent out an invitation to the Socialists in the countries of the Allies to a meeting for the purpose of launching a "peace offensive." The Russian Soviet followed this up a few days later by inviting the Socialists of all countries to meet and discuss peace. It was then decided to send a "Labour" delegation from Great Britain to Russia via Stockholm, and amongst the delegates chosen were Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Jowett, nominees of the I.L.P. The Foreign Office, under Lord Robert Cecil, granted passports in spite of the urgent telegram of protest from the British Workers' League, signed by Mr. J. A. Seddon. The Government, however, decided that it would be advisable to give the Russians an opportunity of meeting representatives "of all sections of British thought" and remained deaf to this appeal, but the sailors of the National Seamen's Union took the law into their own hands and refused to navigate the ship that was to carry Mr. MacDonald and his fellow I.L.P.er to Stockholm.

Three days later (on June 3) a "stop-the-war" Conference took place at Leeds, convened by the I.L.P. and B.S.P. (British Socialist Party), and supported by all the most violent revolutionaries and future members of the Communist Party—Tom Mann, Arthur MacManus, William Gallacher, Sylvia Pankhurst and others; as well as by members of the Parliamentary Labour Party—Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden, Charles Roden Buxton, etc.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who moved the first resolution, congratulating the people of Russia on the success of their

THE LEEDS CONFERENCE, 1917

The following is a copy of the Manifesto issued during the War—in May, 1917—in connection with the Leeds Conference.

Great Labour, Socialist *and* Democratic Convention *to hail the Russian Revolution* *and to Organise the British Democracy* *To follow Russia*

May 23rd, 1917.

To Trades Councils, Trade Unions, Local Labour Parties, Socialist Parties, Women's Organisations, and Democratic Bodies.

DEAR COMRADES,

The Conference to which we recently invited you is already assured of a great success.

It will be one of the greatest Democratic Gatherings ever held in this country. It will be historic. It will begin a new era of democratic power in Great Britain. It will begin to do for this country what the Russian Revolution has accomplished in Russia.

There is little time for preparation. Action must be taken immediately by every Branch and Society desiring to be represented. It seems not unlikely, owing to the rush of applications for delegates' tickets, that the committee may be unable to give facilities for those who delay till the last moment.

The Conference will be held in the **ALBERT HALL, LEEDS**, on **SUNDAY, JUNE 3rd**, commencing at 10.30 a.m.

We now send you the Resolutions which are to be discussed. Owing to the shortness of time for the preparation for the Conference the proceedings will not be subject to the rigid rules which usually govern Labour and Socialist Congresses. It will be a Democratic Conference to establish Democracy in Great Britain.

Russia has called to us to follow her. You must not refuse to answer that appeal.

Send in your application for Delegates' Cards at once. You are entitled to send one delegate however small your membership may be, but an additional delegate for each 5,000 of your membership above the first 5,000, or part of 5,000.

Applications, accompanied by a fee of 2s. 6d. for each delegate, must be sent to one of the Secretaries as under:

ALBERT INKPIN, Chandos Hall, 21a, Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C.2.

FRANCIS JOHNSON, St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4.

In the confident hope that your Society will join in this great event,

On behalf of the United Socialist Council,

We remain,

Yours fraternally

H. ALEXANDER
CHAS. G. AMMON
W. C. ANDERSON
C. DESPARD
E. C. FAIRCHILD
J. FINEBERG
F. W. JOWETT

GEO. LANSBURY
J. RAMSAY MACDONALD
TOM QUELCH
ROBERT SMILLIE
PHILIP SNOWDEN
ROBERT WILLIAMS

THE ABOVE APPEAL FOR THE LEEDS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM A PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL NOTICE WHICH WAS RECENTLY ISSUED BY THE BRITISH EMPIRE UNION.

revolution, went on to describe a union amongst the democracies which would "enable them to march out and subdue the world to the worker, to whom it ought to belong."

As a means towards this end the fourth resolution was proposed by Mr. W. C. Anderson, M.P., advocating the inauguration of "Workers' and Soldiers' Councils" on the Russian model. The proposal was agreed to and a committee appointed to organise the movement, but either it failed to materialise or went underground, for nothing more was heard of it until January 1919, when a paragraph in the *Daily Herald* suggested that this organisation was in existence.

It was this June of 1917 that Lord Robert Cecil, then in charge of the Foreign Office, elected to send Mr. Henderson, a leading member of the Party that was identifying itself with all the most extreme revolutionaries of this country, out to Russia in order to replace Sir George Buchanan as representative of His Majesty in Moscow. No hint of this, however, was given in Lord Robert's telegrams to the ambassador, announcing the arrival of the Labour leader. On the contrary, it was explicitly stated: "There is no question of your being recalled."¹ Mr. Henderson was only to visit Russia on a special mission in order to inspire confidence in Russian workers with regard to the democratic aims of Great Britain, and it was suggested that Sir George should start a little later for a visit to England. It was left to Mr. Henderson himself to inform Sir George on his arrival that "he would have to go."² On closer acquaintance, however, he appears to have come to the conclusion that Sir George Buchanan was as representative of democracy as himself, and decided to keep him on. In the course of a conversation with Albert Thomas, the French Minister of Munitions [Sir George relates] Henderson said: "I have decided to leave Buchanan."³

Such a procedure is surely unparalleled in the history of British diplomacy, and it was that of a Conservative Assistant Foreign Secretary. For this lowering of ambassadorial prestige Mr. Lloyd George cannot therefore be held entirely to blame. Sir George Buchanan, however, seems to have felt only passing annoyance at the insult, and as soon as he had recovered his equanimity pronounced Henderson a very good fellow. The intended ambassador thereupon completed his mission by conferring with the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, which was the nucleus of the Bolshevik organisation that a

¹ Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, vol. II, p. 144.

² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

few months later was to gain the upper hand, and early in July returned to England.

A further attempt was now made to organise an international Socialist Conference at Stockholm in August, but the British Government decided that it could not permit delegates from Great Britain to meet enemy subjects. The Labour Party, however, resolved to proceed with the arrangements for the Conference, and Mr. Henderson, although a Cabinet Minister, went over to Paris with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to discuss matters with the French Socialists. A special conference of the Labour Party was then convened for August 10 and, according to Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Henderson now gave the latter the assurance that he would use all his influence to prevent representatives of the Labour Party from meeting enemy delegates. At the conference, however, he strongly expressed the opposite view, and urged that the Labour Party should send delegates to Stockholm. As a result, he was obliged to resign from the Cabinet on August 11, his line of conduct having deprived him of the support even of his Labour colleagues in the House of Commons.

Meanwhile matters were going from bad to worse in Russia. The Bolsheviks, or Left Wing of the Social Democratic Party, constituted only a minority amidst the rival factions of which the Social Revolutionaries were by far the most numerous. But in April of that year the Bolsheviks had been reinforced by the arrival of their old leader Lenin, and some 200 of his followers, in the famous sealed train which conveyed him back to Russia from Switzerland, where he had been living. At about the same time, Trotsky arrived from the United States, followed by over 300 Jews from the East End of New York, and joined up with the Bolshevik Party. On July 17 this faction attempted a *coup d'état* which was suppressed, and the leaders—Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev—fled to Finland. But in October they returned, and on November 7 brought off a successful rising, overthrew the Provisional Government under Kerensky and formed another, under the name of "The Council of People's Commissaries," with Lenin as First Commissary and Trotsky as Commissary of Foreign Affairs, to act under the Central Committee of the All Russian Congress of Soviets.

It would be outside the scope of this book to relate the story of the Bolshevik revolution, but it is necessary to give a brief account of the intrigues that led up to it, in order to understand the nature of the forces by which the politicians of the west

of Europe found themselves confronted. Had the Bolsheviks been, as they are frequently represented, a mere gang of revolutionaries, out to destroy property, first in Russia and then in every other country, they would naturally have found themselves up against organised resistance by the owners of property all over the world, and the Moscow blaze would have been rapidly extinguished. It was only owing to the powerful influences behind them that this minority party was able to seize the reins of power and, having seized them, to retain their hold of them up to the present day.

The process of introducing Bolshevism into Russia was well described by Mr. Winston Churchill when he said :

Lenin was sent into Russia by the Germans in the same way that you might send a phial containing a culture of typhoid or of cholera to be poured into the water supply of a great city, and it worked with amazing accuracy.

General Hoffmann, who negotiated the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with the Bolsheviks, described the process in much the same way, only varying the metaphor by comparing the Bolsheviks to a consignment of poison gas. General Ludendorff, indeed, actually admitted that :

By sending Lenin to Russia our Government did, moreover, assume a great responsibility, but from the military point of view his journey was justified. Russia had to be laid low, but our Government should have seen that we were not also involved in her fall.¹

It was not, therefore, as is frequently stated, that the Germans facilitated the return of Lenin to Russia, but that he was definitely *sent* there by them.

The plan was suggested by a man whose rôle in the history of world revolution has not been sufficiently appreciated by contemporary writers.²

Parvus, whose real name was Israel Lazarevitch Helphand, was a Jew of the province of Minsk. In the second half of the eighties he took part in the work of revolutionary circles

¹ General Ludendorff, *My War Memories*, vol. ii, p. 509.

² The following pages are taken almost verbatim from the *History of Bolshevism* by General Spiridovitch, a former agent of the Russian Intelligence Service, not to be confused with General Tcherep Spiridovitch, whose somewhat imaginative writings have appeared in this country and America. The book here quoted exists only in Russian.

in Odessa. In 1886 he went abroad and became a member of the German Social Democratic Party, and a pro-German. He was sent to Constantinople by the German Government, and it was there that he laid the foundations of his fortune. From there also he carried on pro-German propaganda in the Balkans, rewarding with money those who had to be rewarded, amongst these the Roumanian-Bulgarian Rakovsky, who was also a German agent.

Soon, however, by German orders, Parvus went to Geneva, where he founded the so-called "Bureau of Economic Research," which was nothing else than a bureau of German espionage and propaganda. Thence he went to Copenhagen, where he became the chief agent for the supply of German coal to Denmark, managing his business through the Danish Social Democratic Party. Parvus thus became a very rich man. Dr. Ziv, in his *Life of Trotsky*, relates that when he was in America in 1916 he said to Trotsky: "How is Parvus?" To which Trotsky replied laconically: "Completing his twelfth million."

Parvus was, after Karl Marx, the great inspirer of Lenin, with whom he became associated in Munich in 1901. Landau-Aldanov, in his book on Lenin, wrote:

It is not Lenin who started this great revolutionary idea, Sovietism, which has nearly conquered the world, it is Parvus—Parvus of the Sultan and William II, Parvus the speculator, Parvus who profited by the War, Parvus who created the famous theory that from the Socialist point of view Germany had the right to victory.

It was Parvus who, according to the Danish Press, suggested to Ludendorff and the German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, that Lenin should now be sent back to Russia; Ludendorff, however, states that the suggestion was made to von Brockdorff-Rantzau, then German Minister in Copenhagen, who passed it on to Bethmann-Hollweg. The latter seems the most likely story in view of von Brockdorff-Rantzau's "Illuminist" tendencies and subsequent connection with the Bolsheviks—a point to which I shall return later.

Lenin, whose real name was Vladimir Ilitch Ulianov, was born at Simbirsk in 1870, the son of a small Russian noble, a landed proprietor and belonging to the Orthodox Church. His revolutionary career began whilst he was at the University of Kazan, where he became a devotee of Karl Marx, and was finally expelled for taking part in student riots. At the same

time, in 1887, his brother Alexander, who was teaching at the St. Petersburg University, was arrested and finally executed for taking part in an attempt on the life of the Emperor Alexander III. In 1891 Lenin went to St. Petersburg University, where he completed his studies for the law, but never practised, and became a professional revolutionary. In 1896 he was arrested, and in 1897 sent to Siberia, after which he was allowed to go abroad. It was at a meeting of the Russian Social Democratic Party in London in 1903 that he became the leader of the Bolshevik section, which on that occasion split away from the Mensheviks under Martov.

After this Lenin lived in Russia—maintaining the Bolshevik movement by means of armed raids on banks and post offices carried out by his agents—then in Geneva, in Cracow, in Galicia where, just before the outbreak of war in 1914, he was arrested by the Austrian authorities. But his value as a means for weakening Russia was realised and he was set free.

In June, when Germany was mobilising all her agents, Lenin, whose great aim was to bring about the downfall of Russia, went to Berlin and offered his services to the German Foreign Office. These were at first refused, but a month later, through the intervention of Parvus, who well knew his worth as a revolutionary, Lenin was recalled to Berlin and entrusted with the task of demoralising the Russian and French armies. Immediately on the declaration of war he was to receive seventy million marks, after which further sums would be paid to his account when necessary. This mission was faithfully carried out, and the Russian publicist Bourtzeff, writing in *La Victoire* for October 2, 1920, stated that the French Leninites, recognising no such virtue as patriotism, frankly admitted Lenin's complicity with the Germans, and justified him for accepting German money during the Battle of the Marne and working for the destruction of the French Army.

It was, therefore, no sudden inspiration on the part of Parvus to send Lenin back to Russia in the spring of 1917. Lenin was the instrument that lay at hand, and which had long beforehand been prepared for the task.

The German-Jewish Socialist Eduard Bernstein, who exposed the whole plot in January 1921, declared that he had irrefutable evidence of Lenin's work for the German Government and of the millions he had received. Lenin himself had already admitted it. At a meeting of the T.S.I.K. (the Russian Cabinet) at the end of October 1918, held in Moscow under the presidency of Sverdlov, Lenin said :

I am often accused of making this revolution with German money. I never denied it and do not now. But, on the other hand, I will make the same revolution in Germany with Russian money.

The Germans took good care that he did nothing of the kind. The outbreak of Spartacism—the German brand of Bolshevism—which occurred in Munich in 1919, was very quickly suppressed, and served as an excellent pretext for the German Government to urge the necessity of keeping up their military organisation on the score that they could not disarm in the face of the Communist menace.

Such were the events that led up to the introduction of the Bolsheviks to Russia, when Lenin and his companions, like some culture in a sealed tube—for the doors of the train were literally locked to prevent the escape of the microbes on its passage through Germany—were dispatched from Switzerland to Russia. The people accompanying him were predominantly aliens; out of a list of 165 names published, 23 are Russian, 3 Georgian, 4 Armenian, 1 German and 128 Jewish.

At the same time Lenin was provided with a large sum of money; according to Bernstein, no less than £2,500,000 was supplied to him by the German Imperial Bank.

It was therefore not as a needy revolutionary setting forth on a precarious mission, his soul lit with pure zeal for the cause, that Lenin journeyed into Russia, but as a well-trying agent, versed in all the tricks of intrigue and the art of propaganda, and backed by the powerful organisation of German militarism and international finance.

But to this accusation of having introduced Bolshevism into Russia, Germans reply that if Lenin was their present to Russia, Trotsky was that of Great Britain, and certainly the mysterious release of this most dangerous revolutionary in the United States lends some colour to the theory.

Lev Davidovitch Bronstein, alias Lvov, alias Yanovsky, alias Nicolai Trotsky, was the son of a rich Jewish landowner. In 1897 he started the South Russian Workers' League (Marxist), and two years later was sent to Siberia for four years. Before the War he did not belong to the Bolshevik faction, and was, indeed, the opponent of Lenin in the Social Democratic Party. But his work as a defeatist Internationalist drew him nearer to Lenin, and soon after the War broke out he went to Paris and started a small Bolshevik paper entitled *The Voice*, assisted by a number of fellow Jews, including Axelrod, Pikker, Charles Rappoport, U. Zederbaum and Angelica Balabanova.

The last named acted the part of a German agent in Italy during the War. Alexandra Kollontai, not a Jewess, but the wife of a Russian general, was also a member of this group.

The Voice, which was of strongly pro-German tendencies, was closed down by the French Government in January 1915, whereupon Trotsky started another under a different name, *Our Word*, but this too was stopped in September 1916, and Trotsky was finally deported. After a stay in Spain, which was one of the most important centres of German espionage in Europe, Trotsky went to the United States, where he was engaged in active propaganda when he was arrested at Halifax by order of the British Government. Sir George Buchanan relates that at the request of Miliukov, he asked for Trotsky's release—another instance of the ambassador's blindness to the dangers of the situation, for he must, or should, have been aware of Trotsky's work against the Allies in Paris. Miliukov, however, two days later, requested that the order for Trotsky's release should be cancelled; but, for some inscrutable reason, the British Government ordered him to be set free. This is the fact that provides Germans with the opportunity to say that Great Britain sent Trotsky back to Russia. Yet the German writer Kurt Kerlen, with whom I held a controversy on the question of German complicity with Bolshevism in the *Morning Post* at the end of April 1922, states that it was Kerensky, then Minister of Justice, who procured Trotsky's release.

Lenin and Trotsky were directly fetched into Russia by Kerensky against the express orders of his *bourgeois* Ministerial colleagues, Miliukov and Prince Lvov.

The matter appears to have been arranged with Trotsky's supporters in America, who brought pressure to bear on the British Government. Amongst these, a certain Lincoln Steffens, who was on the committee of an anarchist organisation, "The League for Amnesty of Political Prisoners," appears to have been the leading spirit, and he himself sailed for Russia with Trotsky and his following from the East side of New York.

It was also stated on good authority that Trotsky had the support of certain German-Jewish bankers, who were at this moment financing Bolshevik enterprises. This assertion finds confirmation in a remarkable article entitled "German Gold for Lenin," which appeared in *The Times* of February 9, 1918, quoting documentary evidence produced by the *Petit Parisien*

to show that Lenin, Trotsky and other Bolshevik stalwarts "have been and are in German pay." *The Times* adds :

These documents show that, as early as March 2, 1917, a week before the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, the German Imperial Bank notified its agents in Switzerland to honour all demands by Lenin, Trotsky and their associates for money for propaganda purposes in Russia.

The Times went on to mention the activities of a member of a well-known German-Jewish banking firm who had long been engaged in furthering the German cause in Russia :

His meeting with Protopopoff in Stockholm is a matter of history. After the overthrow of the old régime, he transferred his attention to the anarchists. He was until recently in Petrograd ; indeed, he may still be there.

The whole "German-Bolshevik Conspiracy" was later revealed to the world in a series of documents communicated by Mr. Edgar Sisson, the special representative of the American Committee on Public Information, which throw an amazing light on the rôle of Germany during the early stages of the Bolshevik regime. It was seen here that the Soviet leaders were absolutely controlled and even appointed by the German General Staff and were financed by the Imperial Bank in Berlin. Doubts were of course cast in certain quarters on the authenticity of the *Sisson Report*, but in this case, unlike that of the famous "Zinoviev Letter," the original documents were produced and submitted to experts who expressed no doubt of their genuineness. At any rate, no convincing contrary evidence was ever brought forward.

The Brest-Litovsk Treaty contracted between the Germans and the Bolsheviks on March 3, 1918, which put Russia out of the War and left Germany free to concentrate on the Western Front so as to launch her great offensive of March 18, was the supreme triumph of German intrigue. At the same moment the Bolsheviks issued a Manifesto which was greeted with rapture by Socialists in this country. Dr. Alfred Salter wrote : "It is agreed on all hands that more was achieved for the world at Brest in three weeks, by the enunciation of principles and ideals by Trotsky and his colleagues, than had been accomplished by the Allies in three years of war."¹ One thing, certainly achieved at Brest, was a Treaty that proved a supreme disaster to Russia. This humiliating surrender was

¹ *The Labour Leader*, March 7, 1918

not merely a betrayal of the Allied cause and of the 1,700,000 Russian soldiers who had died to defend it, but of Russia herself, who by the conditions imposed on her, lost vast territories and a large proportion of her most valuable industries. Chicherin himself described it as an "outrageous treaty."¹

The pretext advanced both by Ludendorff and Hoffmann for inoculating Russia with the Bolshevik virus was, as has been said, a "military necessity." Russia had to be put out of the War, and the way paved for a separate peace which the Tsar, loyal to the Allied cause, had refused to sign. This may have been the motive of the military leaders, but within the ranks of the German Nationalists were forces working towards a further end—the complete subjugation of Russia to German control. Had this not been so, it is obvious that German support of the Bolshevik Party would have ceased directly the War was over and the doctrines of Bolshevism threatened to invade Germany. But this was not the case. The German Monarchists of Munich continued to work with the Bolsheviks long after the War had ended, and still to-day the extent of the understanding that exists between them remains a matter for speculation.

It was thus that from March 1918 onwards the Allies were faced by a dual menace—German Imperialism and Russian Bolshevism openly working together for their destruction. Under these circumstances it was necessary to give support to the loyal forces led by Admiral Koltchak in the East and General Denikin in the South of Russia, in order to prevent the Germans from using all the resources of Russia against the Allies. This was the beginning of that "intervention" in Russia—at first by force of arms and later by the supply of arms, munitions and money—which became the subject of so much controversy. Mr. Lloyd George, whilst at first recognising the necessity for intervention, refused to adopt the policy of ostracism which alone could have brought about the downfall of the Bolshevik Government. The French, who saw this clearly from the outset, proposed drawing a *cordon sanitaire* round Russia, which would serve a double purpose by discrediting the Bolshevik Government in the eyes of the Russian people and by preventing the Bolshevik infection from spreading to the rest of Europe.²

¹ Note of Tchitcherine (i.e. Chicherin), People's Commissary for Foreign Affairs of the R.S.F.S.R., to President Wilson, 1918.

² This was also advocated by Colonel Archer Shee in the House of Commons on June 7, 1920. *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cxxx, col. 178.

But Mr. Lloyd George would have none of this. When at the Peace Conference it was proposed to rally the anti-Bolshevist groups in Russia by conferring with their leaders who had taken refuge in Paris, Mr. Lloyd George demanded that the representatives of the Bolshevist Government should also be invited to be present. As this overture would have defeated the whole purpose of the meeting, it met with strong opposition from Monsieur Clemenceau, who, however, only succeeded in getting the proposed Conference relegated to Prinkipo, a little island in the Sea of Marmora. The Bolsheviks, of course, saw their opportunity of strengthening their position by stipulating that the meeting should involve recognition of the Soviet Government and that the Allies should give an undertaking not to interfere in Russian affairs. In other words, no more support was to be given to the anti-Bolshevist forces in Russia. This was only logical. The Allies could not hold out one hand to the Bolsheviks and with the other help their opponents. Mr. Lloyd George's counsels were therefore overruled, and Prinkipo fell through. But the invitation had greatly enhanced the prestige of the Soviet Government and disheartened the loyal Russians.

A further attempt was now made to come to terms with the Bolsheviks by the dispatch of a diplomatic mission. The matter was arranged in concert with Mr. Lloyd George and Colonel House by Mr. Lansing, who selected a young American journalist, Mr. William C. Bullitt, then in charge of the American Peace Delegation, to act as their envoy. Mr. Bullitt started for Russia at the end of February 1919, accompanied by his assistant, Captain Pettit, and Mr. Lincoln Steffens. According to Mr. Bullitt's deposition before the American Senate, he was deputed to attempt to obtain from the Soviet Government an exact statement of the terms on which they were ready to stop fighting and to make a proposal which would be accepted by them.

All three emissaries drew up reports on the state of affairs in Soviet Russia after their return from a stay of exactly one week. As might be expected, all these reports were favourable. Captain Pettit wrote: "It is needless for me to tell you that most of the stories that have come from Russia regarding atrocities, horrors, immorality, are manufactured. . . . Terrorism has ended. . . . For months there have been no executions, I am told." All agreed that "the destructive force of the Revolution is over," and that "the Terror has ceased." As *The Times* observes of these reports: "They

do not indicate any effort at independent investigation. They are variations upon a single theme, which presumably was furnished by Lenin and the Bolsheviks." Doubtless Mr. Lincoln Steffens's former companion, Trotsky, had proved helpful.

On the return of the Delegation, Mr. Bullitt went to Paris with the official text of the Russian proposal, which of course included recognition of the Soviet Government; Mr. Bullitt was cordially received by Mr. Lloyd George and Colonel House.¹ According to his deposition he breakfasted with Mr. Lloyd George—General Smuts, Sir Maurice Hankey and Mr. Philip Kerr being also present—and handed in the Soviet proposal, but Mr. Lloyd George said "he did not know what he could do with British public opinion." He had a copy of the *Daily Mail* in his hand, and he said, "As long as the British Press is doing this kind of thing, how can you expect me to be sensible about Russia?"²

Questioned about this incident by Mr. Clynes later in the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George displayed the utmost vagueness.

There were no approaches at all except what appeared in the Press. Of course there are constantly men of all nationalities coming from and going to Russia, always coming back with their own tales from Russia. But we have had nothing authentic. We have had no approaches of any sort. . . . I think I know to what the Right Hon. Gentleman refers. There was a suggestion that there was some young American who had come back. All I can say about that is that it is not for me to judge the value of these communications.³

On this occasion Mr. Lloyd George, evidently forgetting what had taken place three months earlier with regard to Prinkipo, spoke eloquently of the impossibility of treating with the present Russian Government since there was no Russia, only chaos. "There is no question of recognition. It has never been discussed." Rising to flights of real eloquence he dealt with the question of intervention and asked how it would have been possible to withdraw support from the anti-Bolshevist forces in Russia after the Armistice:

If we, as soon as they had served our purpose, and as soon as they had taken all the risks, had said: "Thank you, we are exceed-

¹ R. B. Mowat, *European Diplomacy 1914-1925*, p. 281.

² *The Bullitt Mission to Russia*.

³ *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cxiv, col. 2945, date of April 16, 1919.

ingly obliged to you. You have served our purpose. We need you no longer. Now let the Bolshevists cut your throats," we should have been mean—we should have been thoroughly unworthy indeed of any great land.

But he was now opposed to sending further troops to Russia : " to attempt military intervention in Russia would be the greatest act of stupidity that any Government could possibly commit." And after explaining that we were not sending troops but only supplying goods to the anti-Bolshevist forces, Mr. Lloyd George went on to say :

Therefore I do not in the least regard it as a departure from the fundamental policy of Great Britain not to interfere in the internal affairs of any land, that we should support General Denikin, Admiral Koltchak and General Kharkoff.

The confusion of thought which led Mr. Lloyd George to imagine that Kharkoff was a person instead of a place has often been quoted as evidence of his curious ignorance with regard to facts. But how many members of the House present perceived the error ? It is not on record that anyone rose to inquire : " But who is General Kharkoff ? " and *Hansard* solemnly enters the reference to this mythical warrior in the Index of *Parliamentary Debates* without comment.

Two months earlier a mistake made by Mr. Lloyd George in the matter of historical accuracy had also passed unnoticed. In urging the case against intervention, he had said in the House on February 12, 1919 :

You may say that it [the Bolshevik Government] is a blot on civilisation, and that you must crush it. It does not represent Russian public opinion. It simply governs by terror. Exactly the same was said about the French Revolution and it was true. *We intervened there*, and there was a war of twenty-two years. Does anyone propose that ? (My italics.)

And Mr. Lloyd George went on to urge his honourable friends to turn their minds occasionally from newspapers and " read up the story of the French Revolution."

Excellent advice, and if only Mr. Lloyd George had read it up before this Debate he would have learnt that we did *not* intervene in France, but that France declared war on us on February 1, 1793, that is to say on the very day that a " Prin-kipo " had been proposed at Moerdyk between the British Ambassador and Dumouriez, the Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies in the Netherlands. The twenty-two years of war that followed were the only alternative to the peace

advocated by the Whigs, to be obtained by abject surrender, a peace that, as Pitt declared, would be "precarious and disgraceful. . . . What sort of a peace must that be in which there is no security? Peace is desirable only in so far as it is secure."

Unfortunately there seems to have been no one in the House of Commons on February 12, 1919, to remind Mr. Lloyd George of the facts of history and of Pitt's admirable aphorism, so applicable to the present situation. Hence our policy with regard to Russia was to be founded on an historical precedent which did not take place! Never was the axiom of Sir Francis Bacon more aptly illustrated: "No man ignorant of history can govern."¹

The real lesson of the French Revolution was the mistake of half-hearted intervention. If in 1792 the Allies had intervened in force and rallied the loyal elements all over France, especially if they had supported La Vendée, monarchy might have been saved and the Terror averted. But the provocative manifesto, falsely attributed to the Duke of Brunswick, had the effect of uniting sections of the French people, hitherto hostile to each other, in a common patriotism, and the unexplained retreat of Brunswick at Valmy a month later destroyed the last hope of successful intervention.

This same policy of forcible words, followed by feeble action, was the one pursued by the Allies in 1919 with regard to Russia. History repeated itself exactly; even the incident of Valmy found its counterpart in the collapse of Judenitch, brought about, it was said, by the unaccountable failure of supplies to his troops.

So both in France and in Russia some mysterious agency seemed to be at work, frustrating the designs of those who would have saved the country, and ensuring the triumph of the revolutionaries who had usurped the reins of power.

¹ If Mr. Lloyd George had read up the history of the French Revolution in the pages of Carlyle, his error here is explicable. This is how the incident in question is described by Carlyle:

"England has cast out the Embassy: England declares war—being shocked principally, it would seem, at the condition of the River Scheldt. Spain declares war: being shocked principally at some other thing [Carlyle evidently could not be bothered to find out what this was] which doubtless the manifesto indicates. Nay we find it was not England that declared war first or Spain first; but that France herself declared war first on both of them," etc.

CHAPTER V

BRITISH BOLSHEVIKS

IN 1919 England was faced by as great a danger as in 1914, and a danger of a more insidious kind. Then she had been threatened by attack from without, and the issues were clear to all except the minority of Pacifists, whose bleatings were drowned in the strains of "Tipperary" and the tramp of marching feet; now she was threatened by disintegration from within, her foes were those of her own household working openly with her enemies abroad for her destruction. Thus, after the signing of the Armistice, whilst the tumult and the shouting died and the captains and the kings departed, a new sound of battle arose, but the same battle under a different guise.

For in the revolutionary crisis that ensued the same Prussian spirit prevailed, the same sabre-rattling alternating with the same plaint of aggression towards an inoffensive victim, the same methods of organisation, the same network of agents—even many of the same individuals—carrying on the same propaganda against the British Empire and the Allies by word of mouth and by the floods of literature that now bore the stamp of Moscow.

So at the very moment when the victory for which countless gallant Englishmen had laid down their lives had been achieved and the nation might have settled down in security to the work of reconstruction, a wave of revolution broke over England. Instead of the peace for which everyone had craved throughout four long years of war, a new era of strife began; the very air was charged with violence.

What means were taken by the Allied Powers to prevent the tide of Bolshevism from rolling westwards? How was it that all civilised governments, seeing the havoc that had been wrought in Russia, did not immediately organise a united front against Bolshevik propaganda as they had earlier

organised a united front against the invading German armies ? Posterity will ask this question.

The answer is partly that the men in power at the time did not believe in the danger. Mr. Lloyd George in the speech of April 16, 1919, already quoted, had referred to "the item in our policy . . . what I call to arrest the flow of lava, that is, to prevent the forcible eruption of Bolshevism into Allied lands." But by this he meant only the incursion of the Red Armies, not the more formidable invasion of Bolshevik doctrines which were being systematically disseminated in Allied countries. And he went on to say: "Bolshevism itself is rapidly on the wane. It is breaking down before the relentless pressure of economic facts."¹

This was indeed the general opinion at the moment. Just as in August 1914 we were frequently told the War would be over by Christmas, so from the first day of the Bolshevik regime we were repeatedly assured that it was tottering to its fall, that only a few months must see its final collapse. Still to-day, after nearly fourteen years of Bolshevik government, we hear the same assertion repeated with undiminished confidence.

In 1919 there were, however, some grounds for this conviction. The position of the usurping faction was exceedingly insecure; at any moment the *coup d'état* of November 1917 might have been reversed and the Bolsheviks hurled from power by a rival faction, or overthrown by the White Armies supported by the disaffected peasantry. For it must be remembered that the peasants, momentarily placated by the Bolsheviks' permission to seize the land, were never sympathetic to Bolshevik doctrines. The Bolsheviks on their part detested the peasantry. "The peasants," said Maxim Gorky in an interview with the *Daily News*, "are brutal and debased, hardly human. I hate them."² The party that professed to stand for the rights of the peasants were the Social Revolutionaries; the Bolsheviks took their stand on the industrial workers of the towns.

Everything, therefore, pointed to an early collapse of the Bolshevik regime, and, but for Mr. Lloyd George this might well have taken place in 1919. It was Mr. Lloyd George who, by his persistent attempts to treat with the Bolshevik leaders, from Prinkipo onwards, invested them with an authority to which they had no legal right and saved the Bolshevik regime

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xiv, cols. 2943, 2944.

² *Daily News*, October 3, 1921.

each time it was about to fall. This policy not only sealed the doom of Russia, but proved disastrous in its consequences to Great Britain by raising the prestige of the Bolshevik Government in the eyes of the British working-classes.

It is true that Mr. Lloyd George frequently denounced the Bolsheviks in unmeasured terms, but at such a crisis it was deeds not words that counted. How was it possible to convince the working-men of the havoc wrought by Bolshevism if the Prime Minister continued to advocate trade relations with the authors of that havoc? How could they be expected to believe in the misery of Russia whilst he spoke in glowing terms of its bulging corn-bins?

Nothing, then, was more urgent than to show the workers of Western Europe whither these doctrines had led in Russia, and to check the spread of Bolshevism in their midst. A strange personal experience showed me that in England, at any rate, nothing was done officially to stem the tide. It was at the moment that Bolshevism was first talked of in this country and the word was still unfamiliar to us. As I happened then to have a near relation at the X Office—a Government Department—I asked him what Bolshevism signified, to which he replied: "Come to the X Office, and our expert, Mr. R., will explain it to you." Accordingly on the day appointed I arrived at the Office, and for about half an hour listened to an admirable exposition of the doctrines of Bolshevism and their effects in Russia. At the end of the conversation Mr. R. added with great earnestness:

"But the terrible part of all this is that we are threatened with the same thing in this country. The Bolsheviks have organised a tremendous campaign which they intend to carry out in England. The only thing we can do to stop it is to carry out a counter-campaign immediately. For three months we have had a plan drawn up, but the whole thing has been turned down and we can do nothing."

And with a hopeless gesture he added: "We are in despair. Unless something is done quickly, we shall be flooded with Bolshevism."

It was the old story we had heard from official investigators of espionage during the War: "It is no good our sending in reports. Nothing will be done. We are up against a brick wall." Now that the German menace had given way to the Bolshevik menace, here was the same brick wall again! What was the explanation? Partly perhaps a very simple one—a fault in the system. In all Government Departments the real

work of investigation is done by subordinates ; it is they who handle the documents conveying the necessary information. The chiefs are politicians occupied with parliamentary business, who have neither the time nor the inclination to study reports and acquaint themselves with what is really going on. So it is that the men who act do not know and the men who know have not the power to act. The two seldom come into direct contact with each other. As a result, policy is frequently based on inadequate information. This explains the strange ignorance of the *dessous des cartes* sometimes displayed by statesmen, particularly Conservatives, in their public utterances. If they would only go personally through some of the evidence in the files of their Departments, they would be better equipped for directing the destinies of the country. Their ignorance, moreover, lays them open to false counsels, and their incredulity with regard to realities is only equalled by their readiness to lend an ear to irresponsible informants.

The inaction of the X Office with regard to the spread of Bolshevism in this country may, no doubt, be largely attributed to this cause ; at the same time it is impossible to doubt that pressure was brought to bear on the Heads of Departments in interested quarters and that the same invisible power which protected the agents of Germany during the War now protected the emissaries of Moscow. The suppression of the first Foreign Office White Paper on Russia¹ and its replacement by a bowdlerised edition in which several striking passages—including the most remarkable of all—were omitted, is evidence of the workings of this power.

How often in the years that followed, the prophetic words of Mr. R., " We shall be flooded with Bolshevism ! " recurred to my mind ! Thirteen years have passed since then, and still Bolshevism continues to be a dominant issue in the world. If only the plan of counter-propaganda drawn up at that time had been carried out, if only all the governments of the world had then put up barriers against the tide, what years of unrest, of agitation, of industrial strife, would have been avoided, and the nations, exhausted by the Great War, could have settled down to peaceful reconstruction ! Instead of this, complete immunity was given to agitators and free access to the country was accorded to the most dangerous agents of Bolshevism.

Mrs. Snowden in her book on Russia asserted that " the policy of the British Government during the War was, as a rule,

¹ *Russia*, No. 1 (1919). A collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia. (Cmd. 8.)

to arrest the little people who were without following and let the bigger folk go free. Scores of examples of this could have been supplied. . . ."¹ If this is true it is clear evidence of the workings of a Hidden Hand. At any rate, what cannot be denied is that important enemy agents, well provided with funds, were not only allowed to carry on their work, but in some cases to occupy key positions in the Government service.

An instance of this was a certain Rothstein who, after being employed in a confidential capacity at the — Office, became later a leading Bolshevist official.

Theodore Rothstein, whose anti-British activities in Egypt had endeared him to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, had been a journalist living in Highgate. But, as the *Daily Telegraph* of July 18, 1921, observed :

Although his extremist views were well known, and although his literary work was markedly anti-British, Rothstein, during the War, was allowed to work for one of our intelligence organisations.

The *Patriot*, commenting on this, adds :

As a matter of fact, some incurable imbecile at the — Office installed this revolutionary Jew as head of a most confidential section, which dealt with information from Slav countries, which he was supposed to analyse and collate for the use of our directors of war. He filled his section with tribesmen, and he was able to evict a loyal Englishwoman, who as a Russian scholar was attached to his office, and who discovered what was going on.²

We may question whether "imbecility" alone accounts for this state of affairs.

In December 1917, after the Bolshevist Government had come into power, Lenin and Trotsky chose Rothstein for the post of Bolshevist Ambassador to Great Britain, but finally decided on Litvinov because, as Radek observed : " Rothstein is occupying a confidential post in one of the British Government Departments, where he can be of greater use to us than in the capacity of semi-official representative of the Soviet Government."³

Meyer Genoch Moisevitch Wallach, alias Litvinov, sometimes known as Maxim Litvinov or Maximovitch, who had at various times adopted the other revolutionary aliases of Gustave Graf,

¹ *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 118.

² *Patriot*, April 3, 1924.

³ Evidence of a Russian to whom this statement was made. *Patriot*, November 15, 1923.

Finkelstein, Buchmann and Harrison, was a Jew of the artisan class born in 1876. His revolutionary career dated from 1901, after which date he was continuously under the supervision of the police and arrested on several occasions. It was in 1906, when he was engaged in smuggling arms into Russia, that he lived in St. Petersburg under the name of Gustave Graf. In 1908 he was arrested in Paris in connection with the robbery of 250,000 roubles of Government money in Tiflis in the preceding year. He was, however, merely deported from France.

During the early days of the War Litvinov, for some unexplained reason, was admitted to England "as a sort of irregular Russian representative"¹ and was later reported to be in touch with various German agents and also to be actively employed in checking recruiting amongst the Jews of the East End, and to be concerned in the circulation of seditious literature brought to him by a Jewish emissary from Moscow named Holtzmann. Litvinov had as a secretary another Jew, named Joseph Fineberg, a member of the I.L.P., B.S.P. and I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World), who saw to the distribution of his propaganda leaflets and articles. At the Leeds Conference of June 3, 1917, referred to in the foregoing chapter, Litvinov was represented by Fineberg. In December of the same year, just after the Bolshevist Government came into power, Litvinov applied for a permit for Russia, and was granted a special "No Return Permit." He was back again, however, a month later, and this time as "Bolshevist Ambassador" to Great Britain. But his intrigues were so desperate that he was finally turned out of the country. His ambassadorial post had been previously occupied by Chicherin, whose activities in this country may also be interesting to follow.

Grigori Vassilievitch Chicherin, a real Russian of good family, was born at Karaul, Tambov, in 1872. After studying history in the University of St. Petersburg, Chicherin was employed in the Archives of the Russian Foreign Office, and whilst there became acquainted with V. M. Naibait, who introduced him into a revolutionary circle. In 1904 he left the Foreign Office and went abroad. In Germany he became acquainted with Karl Liebknecht and other members of the Social Democratic Party, to the Central Committee of which he was elected a member in 1907. This same year he was arrested and tried in Charlottenburg (Berlin) for using a false passport, after which he was deported from Prussia.

It was then, in October 1914, that Chicherin too came to

¹ Lord Curzon in House of Lords, March 26, 1924.

England. On whose orders he was admitted just after the outbreak of war, when the strictest supervision was supposed to be exercised over immigrants, it would be interesting to know. At any rate, Chicherin was not only allowed to land but to remain throughout the War, carrying on anti-militarist activities and acting as secretary to the International Society for assisting Russian Political Prisoners in Siberia, of which the headquarters were in Switzerland. In this work he was in close touch with the Left Wing of the Labour Party, and at the same time frequented the Communist Club, where he foregathered with Germans, openly expressed his anti-British sentiments, and took a leading part in the attempt to foment strikes, stop recruiting and stir up a revolution here. At last, in 1917, he was interned in Brixton prison as a danger to public safety.

These, then, were the sort of people who were at large in England during the War, when we were assured that every undesirable alien had been rounded up and that the spy danger only existed in the imagination of hysterical women. As a result of this extraordinary laxity the country was honey-combed with enemy agents, and after the War had ended the same men who had worked for Imperial Germany carried on their campaign of sedition under the orders of Moscow.

World revolution, of which Moscow now became the G.H.Q., was of course no new thing. I have described elsewhere the course of its development from the eighteenth century onward and the various Socialist and anarchist organisations that existed in Great Britain before the War.¹ So rapidly had the movement gathered force, that those who knew what was going on behind the scenes realised that by 1914 we were on the verge of revolution. The War merely retarded the outbreak, by rallying the manhood of the country to the flag and placing the rest of the nation under discipline. The moment this was relaxed the revolutionaries had a free hand once more.

In England, therefore, the soil was well prepared for the growth of Bolshevism. From 1883 onwards the gospel according to Marx had been preached by the members of the Social Democratic Federation and the I.L.P.; now that same gospel had been put into practical effect in Russia and the monstrous bearded face of the prophet had replaced the ikon and the portrait of the Tsar. What wonder that British Socialists were roused to enthusiasm?

Their attitude towards the Bolsheviks, nevertheless, was

¹ *World Revolution* (1921) and *The Socialist Network* (1926).

somewhat inconsistent, in view of the one they had adopted at the Leeds Conference. Their hero, Kerensky, whose victory they celebrated on that occasion, had now been hurled from power, and his supporters, the Social Revolutionaries, were groaning under the most intolerable tyranny. Whilst the Socialists of Great Britain were exalting the Bolshevik regime, Russian Socialists were denouncing it under such headlines as "Murder of Socialists," "Mass Murders of Workers," "Ill-treatment and Torture of Prisoners." An eloquent appeal by the Social Revolutionaries to the people of Russia was reproduced in *The Times* of April 10, 1919; addressed to "Comrades, Workmen, Peasants, Sailors and Men of the Red Armies," the proclamation went on to say :

Shame to the Bolsheviks, Violators, Liars and "Agents Provocateurs."

The Petrograd Soviet does not express the will of the Workmen, Sailors and "Reds."

The Soviet was not *elected*. The elections were either burked, or held under threats of shooting or starvation. This terrorism completely suffocated freedom of speech, the Press, and meetings of the labouring classes.

The Petrograd Soviet consists of self-appointed Bolsheviks. It is a blind tool in the hands of the "agents provocateurs," hangmen, and assassins of the Bolshevik regime. . . .

The labouring classes are not allowed to congregate. They are not permitted to publish their own newspapers, and they may not utter a word against the Bolsheviks under penalty of being arrested and shot.

In a memorandum issued by the Social Revolutionaries brought forward during their trial at the hands of the Bolsheviks in 1922, they were quoted as saying :

We declare that we will not fold our hands till we have laid bare the whole truth about a regime which would disgrace all Socialism for ever if it did not encounter among the Socialists themselves an opportune moral repudiation. . . .

We demand, with the object of making possible a united front in the West and in Europe, first of all that an end shall be put to the shameful regime of terror, the regime of the Chrezvychaikas (the Cheka), the regime of despotism, blood and filth.¹

The Socialists of Great Britain remained deaf to these appeals. Hardly a word of remonstrance escaped them with regard to the persecution of their Russian "comrades"; on

the contrary, all their energies were concentrated on defending the Bolshevik regime. The "Hands Off Russia Committee" (now the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee), formed in February 1919 with Lenin as President and Trotsky as Vice-President, included both Communists and "Labour" members. It was at a huge meeting of this Committee in March 1920, with Tom Mann in the chair, that Israel Zangwill, the most fiery of Jewish revolutionaries, made his famous utterance that Bolshevism was an applied form of Christianity—a doubtful compliment in view of the speaker's attitude towards Christianity, yet calculated to appeal to the British public.

The *Campaign Guide*, a really admirable compilation of facts, drawn up by the Conservative Central Office in 1922, commenting on the support given by the Labour Party to the Bolsheviks, naïvely observes: "The 'Labour' Party cry of 'Hands off Russia' was inexplicable," and after recounting the services rendered to Germany by the Bolsheviks, the *Campaign Guide* goes on to inquire: "How was it possible to regard the Bolsheviks as otherwise than enemies of the Allied cause? . . . The 'Labour' Party has never explained satisfactorily its hostility to the new States [created by the War] or its campaign in favour of a free hand for the Bolsheviks."

This inability to see the "Labour" Party in its true colours has been the principal cause of the weakness displayed by the Conservatives in dealing with their Socialist opponents. It was precisely because the Bolsheviks were enemies of the Allied cause that they found support amongst the Socialists of Great Britain who, with the exception of Robert Blatchford and of Hyndman with his following, had been in the main pro-German since the first day of the War. It is here then that we may find the reason for the transference of their allegiance from Kerensky to Lenin. The Social Revolutionaries, whose *coup d'état* of March 1917 they had applauded, turned out, after all, not to be Pacifist, but determined on a fight to a finish with German Imperialism; the Bolsheviks, by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and betraying the cause of the Allies, had therefore naturally endeared themselves to all the friends of Germany amongst the Socialists of this country.

Animated by this antagonism to the Allies which they shared in common with the Bolsheviks, and smarting from their defeat at the 1918 Elections—when even Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Philip Snowden were swept from their seats

by the tide of patriotism that still ran high at this crisis—the Labour Party threw in their lot with all the most extreme elements. If Socialism was not to be achieved by the ballot-box, then resort must be made to “Direct Action”—a policy which was endorsed by a huge majority at the Labour Party Conference in June 1919. The rôle played by the “Labour” Party throughout the revolutionary period that followed on the War was really more perfidious than that of the Communists. Without joining in riots and incurring the risks and odium that befell the avowed advocates of revolution, respectable “Labour” members lent their support intermittently to every subversive movement, at one moment making inflammatory speeches, at the next drawing back and urging moderation.

At the I.L.P. Conference in the following April, presided over by Mr. Philip Snowden, a resolution was passed unanimously condemning “all attempts to bring about any *rapprochement* between Labour and Capitalism, or any method of compromise aimed at arriving at a more amicable relation between Labour and Capitalism short of the total abolition of the Capitalist system.”

Mrs. Snowden declared that “she wanted to see in this country a mighty movement composed of the Socialist organisations, the trade unions, and the Co-operative movement which would smash Capitalism as no small section could do it. A little more patience and they would do it.”

With this object in view the Labour Party were also ready to make common cause with the Syndicalists—whose leaders Tom Mann, Noah Ablett and A. J. Cook had been vociferous in the “Mines for the Miners” agitation in 1913—although the Syndicalists’ plan of workers’ control to be achieved by strikes was entirely opposed to Socialist and even to Bolshevik theory. Lenin had made short shrift of the workers who had wanted to take control of their factories,¹ whilst Trotsky demolished Syndicalism with the words :

In all Communist States officials are appointed by the State, and trade unions must only defend the interests of the workers by helping to raise production and not by various exaggerated demands and threats of strikes.

So under Communism, trade unions were only to exist in order to make the workers work harder and, according to

¹ Lenin, *The Chief Task of our Times*, p. 12.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, refusal to perform the toll exacted should be punishable by death.¹

Nothing is more extraordinary than the way men professing such doctrines are able to enlist the workers in their support. Had the faction that triumphed in Russia been Syndicalist, one could have understood their gaining adherents amongst the trade unionists of Western Europe, but that a system by which trade unions, as understood in free countries, would be crushed out of existence, should meet with sympathy from the workers seems at first sight incomprehensible. The explanation can only be that the Syndicalist leaders who now took up the Bolshevik cause were merely bent on the destruction of the existing social order, and looked no further than "the day," whilst the workers who formed their adherents were accustomed to follow them like sheep.

Revolutions are always the work of active minorities working on mass inertia. That is why the oft-repeated phrase, "the British working-man is not a revolutionary," offered no real ground of security. The great mass of the French people were not revolutionary in 1789, but the inaction of the loyal elements resulted in the nation being stampeded into revolution by a handful of well-trained agitators. It is not violence, but apathy that gives revolutionaries their chance, and it is precisely because they are not revolutionaries themselves, that British working-men have allowed themselves to be led unquestioningly by their trade union leaders into action on behalf of a cause that was not their own. Of what concern was the struggle between Russia and Poland to the working-man who, at the ending of the War, asked to be allowed to settle down in peace and improve his own conditions of life? Yet at this moment, when the necessity for setting the wheels of industry again in motion offered him better opportunities than ever before, he was made to "down tools" and demonstrate against assistance being rendered by the Allies to Poland. Even so had the working-men of Paris in 1848 been driven on to the barricades *on behalf of* Poland! Little was done to enlighten the rank and file of trade unionists as to the real issues at stake. The cowardly phrase, "Trust to the common sense of the working-man," served as an excuse for doing nothing and leaving him at the mercy of the agitators.

How near the country was to revolution in those years of 1919 to 1921 only those behind the scenes realised. The

¹ "Compulsory labour with death as the final penalty is the keystone of Socialism."—Bernard Shaw in the *Labour Monthly* for October 1921.

men directing the affairs of State knew little about the true facts of the situation. Surrounded in their offices by a phalanx of respectful subordinates, sheltered by the security which their wealth afforded them from the storm that was raging in the underworld, they could afford to speak loftily of the impossibility of serious disorders in a country that had passed through so many perils. It was those who mixed with the outer world, who talked with people of all kinds and classes, who sat through political meetings—not on the safe rampart of the platform, but in the back rows amongst the malcontents—who realised the forces that were at work. It was not nervous old women who expressed the greatest fear of revolution, but working-men who in their daily lives were brought face to face with Bolshevism. One must have attended the meetings of Sylvia Pankhurst and her kind to realise the pitch of fury to which, by heated oratory, the crowd could be roused.

In all this the hand of Moscow was plainly visible. I remember a meeting at which the wives of loyal miners spoke against the great coal strike of 1921, hardly able to make their voices heard amidst the nasal yells of swarthy aliens picketed at different points of the hall. On going out I noticed a knot of people collected round one of these hecklers, who was furiously vociferating in their midst, when suddenly the voice stopped. Peeping over the shoulders of the crowd to see what had happened, I beheld a sight I shall never forget. The speaker—evidently a native of East Europe—had worked herself up to such a pitch of revolutionary frenzy that she had reached the point of epilepsy; only the whites of her eyes were visible, and, instead of speaking, she could only mouth horribly, no sound coming from her lips.

These were the creatures that were left at large to inflame the minds of the more ignorant amongst the working-classes. In the industrial towns of the North, particularly on the Clyde, the alien agents of revolution were ceaselessly at work, Bolshevik money flowed into the country to finance sedition, and floods of literature were poured out from Moscow and openly distributed. Occasionally a leaflet that went too far was officially confiscated, but this did not prevent its circulation. The theory of the "safety valve" enabled the most violent orators to hold forth in Hyde Park under the protection of the police, and patriots carried away by their feelings into expressing themselves with equal violence were liable to arrest as disturbers of the peace. As an unemployed working-man said to me: "We've got to stand by and listen to well-paid Russian-

Jews using filthy language about the Royal Family, and we can't say anything."

The official view was that all this "did no harm." Yet the results were visible in the strikes that took place throughout this period—the Clyde strike of January 1919 was avowedly an attempt to set up a Soviet government, carried out by the emissaries of Moscow.

Dr. Hagberg Wright in an interesting article on Bolshevism in Great Britain, which appeared in *The Times* of November 8, 1919, observed that a temperature chart of the revolutionary movement might be constructed, showing that the fever had reached its height in the preceding February, from which point it had steadily declined. Alas, for Dr. Wright's optimism, even as he wrote the Triple Alliance was mustering its forces, the great railway strike had just taken place; the Council of Action of 1920, the great coal strike of 1921 backed up with the threat of a general strike, and finally the successful attempt to hold up the country in 1926 were yet to come.

This is not the place to relate the story of these succeeding explosions or to weigh the merits of the opposing parties. Whatever real grievances existed, the rôle of the agitators was not to redress them, but was to exploit them for their own purpose. The point to follow here is the alien conspiracy by which the country was threatened, and the means taken by the Government for national defence. Never was there a moment in the history of this country when the situation needed firmer handling and a more resolute man at the helm.

Yet this was the moment, in September 1919, chosen by Mr. Lloyd George to revert to his old policy of class warfare and inflame popular passions by a proclamation that was nothing less than a call to revolution. This extraordinary manifesto was published in the form of a broadsheet entitled "The Future" and described as a "Government statement of national needs and national policy," which ran as follows:

Millions of gallant young men have fought for the new world. Hundreds of thousands died to establish it. If we fail to honour the promise given to them we dishonour ourselves.

What does a new world mean? What was the old world like? It was a world where toil for myriads of honest workers, men and women, purchased nothing better than squalor, penury, anxiety and wretchedness—a world scarred by slums and disgraced by sweating, where unemployment through the vicissitudes of industry brought despair to multitudes of humble homes; a world where, side by side with want, there was waste of the inexhaustible riches

of the earth, partly through ignorance and want of forethought, partly through entrenched selfishness.

If we renew the lease of that world, we shall betray the heroic dead. We shall be guilty of the basest perfidy that ever blackened a people's fame. Nay, we shall store up retribution for ourselves and for our children. *The old world must and will come to an end. No effort can shore it up much longer.* If there be any who feel inclined to maintain it, let them beware lest it fall upon them and overwhelm them and their households in ruin. (My italics.)

It should be the sublime duty of all, without thought of partisanship, to help in building up the new world, where labour shall have its just reward and indolence alone shall suffer want.

These sentiments are indistinguishable from those contained in the Labour Party manifesto, *Labour and the New Social Order*, drawn up in January of the previous year (1918). There it was said :

Just as in the past the civilisations of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Carthage, and the great Roman Empire have been successively destroyed, so . . . the civilisation of all Europe is even now receiving its death-blow. We of the Labour Party . . . recognise in the present world catastrophe [the War], if not the death, in Europe, of civilisation itself, at any rate the culmination and collapse of a distinctive industrial civilisation, which the workers will not seek to reconstruct. . . .

The individualist system of capitalist production, based on the private ownership and competitive administration of land and capital, with its reckless "profiteering" and wage slavery; with its glorification of the unhampered struggle for the means of life and its hypocritical pretence of the "survival of the fittest"; with the monstrous inequality of circumstances which it produces and the degradation and brutalisation, both moral and spiritual, resulting therefrom, may, we hope, indeed have received a death-blow.

The remedy for all these ills was of course the elimination of the private capitalist and the "Common Ownership of the Means of Production"—in a word, the system that had been introduced in Russia with fatal results.

Mr. Lloyd George in proclaiming the necessity for the old world coming to an end, and the impossibility of "shoring it up much longer," was therefore playing directly into the hands of the Party whose principles he professed to abhor. Whatever evils still existed in the "old world," it was a world that held much that was good and noble, a world that throughout the last century of its existence had seen an immense advance in human progress, a world in which countless devoted

men and women, from Lord Shaftesbury onwards, had sacrificed their lives to the cause of the poor and oppressed, creating by their efforts a civilisation which though imperfect, like all human things, was yet immeasurably better than anything that had gone before.

In 1854 Charles Kingsley wrote :

There is no doubt that the classes possessing property have been facing since 1848 all social questions with an average of honesty, earnestness and good feeling which has no parallel since the days of the Tudors. . . . The love of justice and mercy toward the handicraftsman is spreading rapidly as it never did before in any nation upon earth ; and if any man still represents the holders of property, as a class, as the enemies of those whom they employ, desiring their slavery and their ignorance, I believe that he is a liar and a child of the devil, and that he is at his father's old work, slandering and dividing between man and man.¹

And in 1929 Mr. Ben Turner, now Labour M.P. for Batley, describing the enormous improvements in conditions of working-class life, said :

More has happened in the way of advancement, in almost every direction, in the last fifty years than during any other period of history.²

To talk of sweeping all this away, of scrapping the whole structure of civilisation, was to borrow the language of the Russian anarchists in the last century, whose dream was a return to primitive savagery. That at a time when passions were running high, a responsible British statesman should express such views must appear inconceivable.

If Mr. Lloyd George thought he would placate the revolutionaries by utterances of this kind, he was strangely mistaken. The answer to his proclamation of September 1919 was the railway strike which began at the end of the same month, bringing the nation, as Mr. Thomas said, nearer to civil war than it had ever been before, and marked by acts of violence which were never reported in the Press. The Syndicalist plan of smashing Capitalism by means of a general strike which would starve the community into submission was admitted afterwards by the late Fred Bramley, then one of the extreme trade union leaders :

A basis of joint action was arrived at some time ago between the Trades Union Parliamentary Committee and the Central

¹ Preface to *Alton Locke*, 1890 edition, p. xli.

² *Daily Express*, February 27, 1929.

Board of the Co-operative Union. . . . We set out to secure that if the railway dispute was extended (if it developed into a general strike) we should avoid, if possible, the withdrawal of men from Co-operative employment in order that the Co-operative movement could be used as a food-distributing agency on behalf of the workers. *In other words, we were not going to cut off our own supplies.*¹

There was no longer any question that the weapon of the strike at this crisis was being used for a political purpose, and that the nation was threatened by a criminal conspiracy against its very existence.

In the face of this danger Mr. Lloyd George displayed the same tergiversations that had characterised his dealings with the Germans and the Russian Bolsheviks. In his broadsheet of September 1919 he had used almost the identical language of "Labour and the New Social Order"; in the following spring he urged the impossibility of any coalition between Liberals and Labour. This followed on the threat of the Miners' Federation on March 10, 1920, to compel nationalisation of the mines by means of a general strike. The plan was turned down by the Trades Union Congress, but the occasion offered Mr. Lloyd George the opportunity to utter an eloquent warning against the dangers of Socialism. The reason for this is not far to seek. The Coalition Government was rapidly falling into discredit, the Conservatives were becoming restive, and their preponderance in numbers precluded any possibility of a Liberal Government as the result of an appeal to the country. Moreover, the personal popularity of Mr. Lloyd George was waning. Everything, therefore, depended on holding the Coalition together if Mr. Lloyd George was to remain in power. The peril of Socialism provided the necessary argument, which Mr. Lloyd George set forth with more than his usual eloquence at a meeting of Liberal Members of Parliament in Westminster Hall on March 18, 1920. A great new party had burst into the system, the people were slowly moving towards Socialism. "Do not make the mistake of treating this as if it were a sort of plague or pestilence that will pass away when the weather improves. It has come to stay." The programme of the Labour Party was "common ownership. In France it was known as Communism, in Germany it was known as Socialism, and in Russia it is known as Bolshevism. It is the doctrine of common ownership."

And Mr. Lloyd George went on to show the error of "those

Evening Standard, October 17, 1919.

who do not realise that civilisation is in jeopardy in every land, and that every Government in every country is trying to rally all the forces of ordered liberty in order to keep down these insurgent forces that are threatening destruction. That is all I want to see done here. I want to see more co-operation, and closer co-operation between all those who have a common purpose. Unless you do it, the forces of anarchy, the forces of subversion, will inevitably triumph." ¹

Nothing could be truer or more admirably expressed. How often in after-years one longed to hear words as forcible as these from the lips of Conservative Ministers! No man in public life during the last twenty years had ever denounced Socialism so eloquently as Mr. Lloyd George, and probably no one has helped it so effectually.

Two months after this stirring address Mr. Lloyd George was welcoming the representatives of Bolshevism to London.

¹ *The Times*, March 19, 1920.

CHAPTER VI

THE SURRENDER TO THE SOVIETS

THE story of British relations with the Soviets, which began in 1920, will be read with amazement by posterity. What happened in the inner councils of the Government which led them to admit to the soil of England the purveyors of those doctrines that were proving so disastrous at home? Undoubtedly pressure had been brought to bear on the Prime Minister from all sides. The Labour Party, as we have seen, had been insistent on friendship with the Bolsheviki from the beginning, and on May 21 of this year (1920) a big appeal by the "Hands Off Russia Committee," advocating a twenty-four hours' general strike in order to coerce the Government to withdraw help from Poland and from the anti-Bolshevist forces, had appeared in the *Daily Herald*, with the signatures of a number of "Labour" members appended.

In view of the consistent advocacy of the Bolshevist cause by the official organ of the Labour Party, it was perhaps not unnatural that the constitutional Press should begin to inquire whether the *Daily Herald* was not receiving subsidies from Moscow. The suggestion was indignantly refuted by the editor, Mr. George Lansbury, at the Albert Hall, on his return from a visit to Moscow in March 1920. "The whole libel," he declared, "was a filthy lie and the libellers in the Yellow Press knew it was a lie. . . . Neither directly nor indirectly, nor in any sort of way, had the *Daily Herald* received a single penny or a single ounce of paper from outside the country."¹ But as we shall see later, Mr. Lansbury was apparently not always aware of transactions taking place with regard to the financing of his own paper. Moreover, Mr. Lansbury's memory seemed at times to play him tricks. Thus, for example, his account of his meeting with H. V. Keeling, the English trade unionist who was imprisoned at this time in

¹ *Daily Herald*, March 22, 1920.

Moscow, differed fundamentally from that of the prisoner himself.

Keeling was a lithographer and printer, a member of the Lithographic Artists' and Engravers' Union, who, after spending five years in Russia, returned to England early in 1919 and created a considerable sensation by his articles in the *Westminster Gazette*, and later by a book describing graphically the miseries of the Bolshevik regime. But he had underestimated its ferocity, for on his return to Russia with Professor W. T. Goode, a few months later, in search of further experiences, he was promptly imprisoned by the Cheka. It was there that he was visited by Lansbury, who declared that Keeling had confessed to him that he was not the author of the book or articles which had appeared under his name, and that, smitten with contrition at having lent himself to this imposture and at having maligned the Bolsheviks, he had returned to Russia in order "to make amends" and "to put things right." To fling the repentant prodigal into jail was hardly a gracious way to receive his recantation, so that even judging by Lansbury's account, the incident was not calculated to inspire belief in the benignity of Bolshevism. Keeling, however, on his, perhaps unexpected, return to England—for it was no easy matter to escape from the clutches of the Cheka—denied the whole story of his confession, and declared that he had only seen Lansbury in the presence of a Jewish commissar, before whom all free speech was impossible. He added that he never recanted his former opinions on Bolshevism expressed in the book and articles he had written.

At any rate, Lansbury did his best to make amends for Keeling's revelations, and at the monster meeting at the Albert Hall organised to celebrate his return from the Soviet Paradise, and presided over by Tom Mann, he spoke in glowing terms of the humanity of the Bolsheviks.

It is true that in an article contributed to the *Daily Herald*¹ he admitted that in Russia everyone was hungry, nevertheless "whatever their faults the Communist leaders of Russia had hitched their wagon to a star—the star of love, brotherhood, comradeship." Lenin, he declared later on at a meeting in Trafalgar Square, was "a pure-hearted, noble soul."

It is much to be regretted that in view of these conflicting reports on Soviet Russia, the British Government did not follow the precedent of Germany and send a deputation of impartial British workers to Russia in order to study conditions

¹ *Daily Herald*, March 18, 1920.

for themselves. This action on the part of the German Government had a great effect in disillusioning the German working-classes on the benefits of Bolshevism. Instead of organising such an expedition the British Government left it to the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress to form a delegation which set out for Russia in May of the same year. This included Robert Williams, Wallhead, Purcell, Ben Turner, Tom Quelch, McLane, Jack Tanner, Clifford Allen and Mrs. Snowden, most of whom were already ardent admirers of the Soviet system, certainly not to be regarded as impartial witnesses of its workings. In October of the previous year Mrs. Snowden at a meeting in the Albert Hall had denounced the "wholesale cruel intervention directed against our friends in Russia whose ideal is our own." A great deal was made out of her supposed "conversion" from Socialism, as shown by her condemnation of certain aspects of Bolshevism in articles and speeches after her return from Russia. But this was made to appear a great deal more sweeping in the reports published by the "Capitalist press" than by the *Daily Herald* or in her book, *Through Bolshevik Russia*. In the latter and in the book that followed, *A Political Pilgrim in Europe*, it was seen that Mrs. Snowden had lost none of her enthusiasm for Socialism or changed her opinion as to the way it was to be brought about. For even when she had talked of "smashing Capitalism," she had always maintained that this could be effected without a bloody revolution.¹ Her visit to Russia merely confirmed her in this opinion, but she was ready to make every excuse for the Bolsheviks. The misery she had seen in Russia was not caused by the application of Socialist theories, but by the War and the Allies' blockade,² the atrocities which she admitted had taken place were only incidental, the work of a few "lustful brutes," not organised by the gentle creatures in the Kremlin. Even the creation of what she politely calls by its official designation, the Extraordinary Commission—alias the Cheka with its ghastly torture chambers—was to be attributed to the "fatal policy of the Allies" and the "resumption of war by the misguided Poles."³ As to the leaders themselves, they were of course fanatics, but well-meaning and kindly at heart.⁴ Kameneff, Sverdlov and Krassin she describes as "good and sincere Communists."⁵ Krassin, as we shall see later, was at this date not a Communist at all.

¹ *Report of Annual Conference of the I.L.P.*, 1920, p. 74.

² *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

At the same time it is evident that the British delegation did not altogether "hit it off" with the Bolsheviks. ~~One~~ the party having been introduced to Trotsky as a conscientious objector met with the unexpected rebuff: "We can have nobody here who preaches peace and wants to stop the war."¹ The pacifist in England must become the militarist in Moscow! An amusing account of the impression created by the British visitors to the Soviet Paradise was given in an intercepted letter from someone in the Moscow Foreign Office to a "Comrade" in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, published later in the British Press.² Ben Turner was described as "evasive and non-committal." Robert Williams "made a most radical speech, more so than he dare do at home in Blighty . . . Purcell alone approached that rarest of all revolutionary virtues—audacity." As to Mrs. Snowden, she was "middle-classy and patronising, full of affectation." Clearly Moscow was no place at the moment for "Parlor Bolsheviks."

This may explain why Mrs. Snowden did not find her hosts of the Kremlin altogether congenial, but it would be absurd to represent her as a convert to the cause of anti-Bolshevism. As she says herself in her book on Russia: "It is not the frank critic of Bolshevism who is doing harm to the Bolshevik cause." Her avowed intention was therefore not to harm Bolshevism in the eyes of the British workers, and in advising them to avoid the violent methods that had been employed in Russia she was at one with Lenin himself, who, in a message conveyed by Lansbury and read out at the Albert Hall meeting on March 21, had said:

If you can bring about a peaceful revolution in England, no one will be better pleased than we in Russia.

The main purpose underlying these assurances of Bolshevik benignity was the resumption of relations with Russia. It was not only the Socialists who desired to bring about this understanding. Earlier in this same year of 1920 a number of British officials, including two officers who had been engaged in military and financial operations in Russia, addressed a memorial to the Prime Minister urging recognition of the Soviet Government, to which the crimes committed *in the past* should not be regarded as an obstacle.³ As several of these gentlemen were closely connected with business circles in this country,

¹ *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 76.

² *Morning Post*, February 21, 1921.

³ *Press* of February 23, 1920.

it is evident that powerful financial influences in the City were behind the petition.

Mr. Lloyd George, surrounded by advisers in the same quarter, now delivered his famous discourse referring to the "bulging corn-bins of Russia."¹ Two months later, on his return from the San Remo Conference, he explained to the House that although in the preceding February, that is to say at the Conference of Premiers and high Ministers in London, the Allies had decided that they could not enter into diplomatic relations with the Soviet Government until they were assured that "Bolshevik horrors" had come to an end, they now saw no objection to trading with it. Even Monsieur Clemenceau had agreed, overruled—Major Archer Shee suggested in the House—by Mr. Lloyd George's opinions. Mr. E. F. Wise then invited Krassin to come to London. The Bolsheviks readily accepted the invitation, suggesting that Mr. Litvinoff should accompany him. But even Mr. Lloyd George drew the line at Litvinoff after that gentleman's earlier exploits in this country, and the Soviet Government was informed that Great Britain had decided to open up relations with the Russian delegation then in Copenhagen, including Mr. Krassin, but excluding Mr. Litvinoff.

Accordingly at the end of May the Russian Trade Delegation arrived in London, headed by Krassin and comprising Victor Nogin—who twenty years earlier had taken refuge in England after his arrest for revolutionary activities—Solomon Rozovsky, Klishko and the staff.

Leonid Borisovitch Krassin, born in Siberia in 1870, was the son of a small Russian official, and was trained at the St. Petersburg Technical Institute as an engineer. During his early life he had taken part in student riots, then in revolutionary agitation, and had been connected with the secret Moscow circle known as the "Temporarily Organised Committee of Action." These activities led to his arrest on several occasions. Krassin then entered the Social Democratic Party, in which he was known as "Comrade Winter," and became a close friend of Lenin, with whom he formed an inner circle of three, concealed not only from the police but from the rest of the Party. Like Parvus, he succeeded, however, in combining his career of conspirator with that of a successful business man. In 1907, after taking part in a revolutionary plot, he escaped to Berlin, where he obtained employment in the Siemens Schuckert firm, an affiliation of the great capitalist

¹ Date of February 10, 1920. *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cxxv, col. 45.

trust, the A.E.G. (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft), and in 1909 was sent back to St. Petersburg as director of a branch of the firm in that city. Early in 1917 Krassin went to Stockholm, where he conferred with the German-Jewish financial agent, Yakov Fürstenberg, alias Ganetsky, with whom he travelled to Berlin. After the Bolshevik *coup d'état* he returned to Russia and took up his post again as representative of Siemens Schuckert. In Germany he had powerful supporters in the leading Jewish financiers, Hugo Stinnes—with whom the question of German reparations was discussed at the London Conference of 1921—and Felix Deutsch, the manager of the A.E.G., of which Rathenau was the President. At the same time Krassin was placed by Lenin at the head of the five principal Government Departments in Russia, including transport and food supply.

Krassin thus played a dual rôle, on one hand representing the interests of the great German-Jewish capitalists, and on the other acting as the lieutenant of Lenin, whose avowed aim was to destroy Capitalism. If any further proof were needed of the connection between Bolshevism and International Finance, the case of Krassin would provide it.¹ It was, therefore, only officially that Krassin represented the Bolshevik regime, in reality his opinions coincided with the large capitalist interests which were working for Germany in the matter of reparations and were using Bolshevism as a means to an end. Krassin handled the situation very skilfully. Obligated, as the representative of Soviet Russia, to profess his sincere belief in Marxist doctrines, and at the same time to win the confidence of British business men, he adopted, when conferring with the latter, an attitude of extreme "moderation," giving the impression that, although a Bolshevik, he recognised the necessity of capitalist enterprise for the present restoration of Russia. When this failed to convince, as in the case of at least one hard-headed financier, Krassin in the course of private conversation admitted confidentially that he had no belief whatever in the doctrines of Communism.

As the representative also of German interests, Krassin naturally found many allies in the City of London. At the time of the Marconi scandal in 1912, the powerful Anglo-

¹ It was stated in one organ of the Press at the time of Krassin's visit to England that he was a Jew and that his real name was Goldfarb. I can find no evidence of this. Krassin appears to have been a real Russian, but married to a Jewess, and as the *Evening Standard* observed: "Question him and you will always find he has a good word to say for the Jews." May 14, 1925.

German influence behind the Deutsche Bank, with which the A.E.G. was intimately connected, had been exposed in *The Times* and *Financial News*. These influences were all ready to support Krassin in his Germano-Russian schemes. Then there was the Supreme Economic Council instituted at the Peace Conference in Paris, with which the Trade Delegates from Russia had primarily to deal. This included Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. J. M. Keynes and Mr. E. F. Wise, whose sympathy with Soviet Russia was already well known.

But negotiations with the British Government proved more complicated. This was not the fault of Mr. Lloyd George, who, on Krassin's arrival at 10 Downing Street for his first interview, came forward into the hall with outstretched hand to welcome the representative of the regime he had so often and so eloquently denounced. In his secretary, Mr. Philip Kerr (now Lord Lothian) and his chief economic adviser, Mr. E. F. Wise, Mr. Lloyd George found full support for maintaining this cordial attitude.

But there was Parliament to reckon with; there were people who asked inconvenient questions in the House, as for example why there should now be famine in Russia in view of her bulging corn-bins. Then there was the matter of British prisoners in Russia, and the awkward question of the anti-British propaganda that the Soviet Government was conducting in the East, especially in Egypt and Persia. On this last rock negotiations temporarily broke down. Besides, it became apparent that Russia would come to no terms without recognition. After a final interview with Mr. Lloyd George, Krassin left Downing Street "looking very cross" and went back to Russia. But negotiations were quickly resumed. A draft agreement was submitted by the British Government on July 7, and met with immediate acceptance. Moscow was ready to explain everything. Bolshevik activities in Persia had been carried on without the consent of the Moscow Executive; as usual, Moscow's right hand did not know what her left hand was doing. In a month Krassin was back again, this time with Miliutin, Kameneff, President of the Moscow Soviet, and with fresh members added to the Delegation.

Kameneff, whose real name was Lev Borisovitch Rosenfeld, was a Jew belonging to the respectable bourgeoisie, born in 1883. From 1900 onwards he was constantly concerned in revolutionary agitation, and became one of the closest associates of Lenin. In December 1914 he was arrested in Petrograd with other Social Democratic members of the Duma, for taking

part in a defeatist plot engineered by Lenin in Switzerland and by Trotsky and Martov in Paris. At the trial Kameneff displayed pitiable cowardice, denying that he had ever been a Socialist and disassociating himself from his companions. On the eve of the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in November 1917, Kameneff's courage again failed him, with the result that Lenin accused him of treachery and "squeaking pessimism." But Kameneff had now been restored to favour. This was the personage chosen to accompany Krassin to London and to supersede him as head of the Trade Delegation. The party was well assorted: Krassin, the serious business man, a "good handshaker," in Wall Street parlance, wealthy enough to install himself with his wife and daughters in a Curzon Street flat and make his way in "Society"; Kameneff, the experienced revolutionary, able to spread his web of intrigue, with Klishko to go on secret errands and act as go-between with the "Labour" Party.

Nicolai Klishko was quite at home in London, having been employed there previously as clerk in the office of Messrs. Vickers, and later, on the staff of Litvinov, whose work he could be trusted to carry on now that his former chief was excluded from the country.

The plan of campaign pursued by the Delegation was in strict accordance with the instructions which, as stated in the Transcaucasian press of September 1920, had been given by the Third International to its agents in foreign countries:

All possible means must be taken to bring about an agreement with the Bourgeois Governments, which should, if necessity arises, be given concessions in Russia.

Bolshevik representatives abroad must not compromise themselves by carrying out Communistic propaganda personally.

This work must be confided to secret agents subordinated to the official representatives of Soviet Russia, and receiving through their intermission the necessary funds for carrying on such activity.

The whole story of this first Bolshevik mission to London would be a comedy of the first order if it had not come so perilously near tragedy. On re-reading the series of incidents that took place, now almost forgotten, it is difficult to believe that such things could really have happened outside the pages of the late Mr. William Le Queux. Unfortunately the humour of the situation was all at the expense of Great Britain, whose Government allowed this gang of international revolutionaries and propagandists, with their attendant swarm of clerks

and little Jewish typists, to come and settle down in spacious Bond Street offices and carry on their schemes for corrupting the British workers, under the protection of the British Constitution.

The return made by the Bolsheviks for this misguided hospitality was to appeal for *heavy civil war* in England. In reply to a questionnaire addressed to the Third International by the I.L.P., asking for a statement of its programme and conditions of affiliation, the Third International pointed out that Communism must inevitably involve revolution and bloodshed; therefore "the workers should prepare, not for an easy Parliamentary victory, but for a victory by a *heavy civil war*." The document went on to say:

It is probable that upon throwing off the chains of the Capitalist Governments, the revolutionary proletariat of Europe will meet the resistance of Anglo-Saxon capital in the persons of British and American capitalists who will attempt to blockade it. It is then possible that the revolutionary proletariat of Europe will arise in union with the peoples of the East and commence a revolutionary struggle, the scene of which will be the entire world, to deal a final blow to British and American capitalism.

It is interesting to note which section of capitalism the British workers were to regard as their enemy.

This message, which was apparently intended only for the private edification of the I.L.P., got into the hands of some of its Left Wing members, who promptly published it in the form of a fourpenny pamphlet from which extracts were reproduced in *The Times* of July 30, 1920.

How inevitably the temperature of the revolutionary fever rose after the introduction of this batch of Bolshevik bacilli, and how disastrous were its effects in swinging the British Labour Party to the Left, can best be appreciated by the following chronological summary of events:

On May 27, 1920, the Russian Trade Delegation, headed by Krassin, arrived in London.

On June 19 the first British Communist Party was formed at the International Socialist Club in City Road, mainly under the auspices of Sylvia Pankhurst, and of which the leading spirit was described as a "Jewess of Russian extraction."¹

In the same month the British Labour Delegates returned in successive groups from Russia, and in July five members of this Delegation—Purcell, Skinner, Ben Turner, Wallhead

¹ *Evening News*, January 12, 1920.

and Robert Williams—issued an appeal to the trade unions for “Direct Action” on behalf of Russia.¹

On August 1 the Communist Party of Great Britain was founded, directly under the orders of Lenin at a conference in the Cannon Street Hotel. The earlier Communist Party formed by Sylvia Pankhurst had incurred the displeasure of Lenin by abjuring parliamentary action which he held to be still necessary. The C.P.G.B. avoided this error and was then affiliated to the Third International. Amongst the delegates who took part in the Conference were Robert Williams, who had just been given the military medal by Lenin whilst in Russia for his assistance on the “home front,” Purcell, William Mellor, who later edited the *Daily Herald*, and Colonel L’Estrange Malone, then Liberal Member for East Leyton. The event was hailed by the *Daily Herald* as “emphatically a gain to the movement in this country,”² and, according to *l’Humanité*, Lansbury declared that most of the editorial staff decided to become members of the new Party.

Two days later, on August 3, Krassin, fortified by Kameneff, returned from Russia. Kameneff lost no time in getting to work. An alarm was immediately spread that Great Britain was “drifting into war with Russia” on behalf of Poland. The truth is that at this moment Russia was making relentless war on Poland and attempting to deprive her of the independence which, as Mr. Winston Churchill eloquently declared, was the lynch-pin of the Treaty of Versailles. Russia’s armistice terms, published a week before the arrival of the Trade Delegation, included the military occupation of Poland for five years, and her complete subjection to the Soviet Government. This was what the British Labour Party sought to facilitate, and on August 5 a telegram was sent out by Arthur Henderson urging citizens to demonstrate against intervention, to demand peace negotiations, the raising of the blockade and resumption of trade relations with Russia.³

As Krassin had just been admitted to the country for the express purpose of carrying out the last item on this programme, its inclusion could only be intended to provide a pretext for agitation. In response to this appeal a Joint Conference of the Labour Party and T.U.C. was called to enforce these demands and to discuss the question of a general strike. It was then decided to form a Council of Action, otherwise a Soviet, the word Council being simply the English

¹ *The Times*, July 29, 1920.

² Date of August 2, 1920.

³ *Morning Post*, August 6, 1920.

equivalent of this Russian word, the rest of the name being presumably derived from the "Committee of Action," in which, as we have seen, Krassin had taken part in Russia. The whole plan was discovered to have been inspired by Kameneff.

The newly formed Council was organised apart from the British Communist Party and included leading members of the Labour Party whom it is customary to regard as "Moderates."

On August 13 a special Labour Conference was held to hear the reports of the Council of Action, at which speeches were made by W. Adamson, M.P., J. R. Clynes, Ernest Bevin, J. H. Thomas, M.P., Tom Shaw, etc. Thomas in moving the resolution, approving the formation of the Council of Action, went on to say that "he believed giving effect to this resolution did not mean a mere strike. It meant a challenge to the whole Constitution of the country." (Prolonged cheers.)¹

On August 19 the affair of the *Daily Herald* came to light. Lansbury, it will be remembered, at the Albert Hall meeting in March, had denounced as "a filthy lie" the suggestion that his paper had received any assistance from the Bolsheviks. In August, however, it transpired that wireless messages, which were intercepted by the British Government, had passed between Chicherin in Moscow and Litvinoff in Copenhagen during Lansbury's visit to Russia, in which Chicherin related that Lansbury was anxious to get help in obtaining paper for printing the *Daily Herald*.

In May Francis Meynell, who was on the staff of the *Daily Herald*, visited Litvinoff in Copenhagen. On July 11 Litvinoff cabled to Chicherin:

If we do not support the *Daily Herald*, which is now passing through a fresh crisis, paper will have to turn "Right" Trade Union. In Russian questions it acts as if it were our organ. After Lansbury's journey it has gone considerably more to the "Left" and decidedly advocates "direct action." . . . I consider work of *Daily Herald* as especially important for us. I advise therefore that this help be offered, etc.

Chicherin replied:

If you have not enough ready money for the subsidy to the *Herald* tell him (presumably Meynell) at any rate the subsidy will be paid by those who have authority to organise the financing of our institutions abroad. The subsidy for the preservation of control must be paid by degrees.

¹ *The Times*, August 14, 1920.

Litvinoff then cabled on July 22 :

I have given instructions that the Chinese bonds which are there be handed over to the *Herald*.

This correspondence was published in *The Times* of August 19. On the following day the *Daily Herald* came out with the headlines :

“NOT A BOND! NOT A FRANC! NOT A ROUBLE!”

and in its issue of the 22nd declared that it had not received a single penny or a single ounce of paper from anyone directly or indirectly connected with the Bolshevik or any other Government—the whole story was a *canard*.

Then suddenly the *Daily Herald* made a great discovery. On September 10, in an article headed “Shall we take £75,000 of Russian money?” it related that as the result of negotiations “spread over many months” the sum had actually been paid over to Francis Meynell on behalf of the *Daily Herald*.

This was to be held in trust for the Third International and to be offered to the *Daily Herald* if the need arose. This sum is now in Meynell’s possession.

Of course the whole thing had come as a complete surprise to Mr. Lansbury and the staff of the *Daily Herald*. Meynell had acted on his own initiative. The first Mr. Lansbury had heard of it was on September 6, when the police visited his son Edgar with pertinent questions about notes which had passed through his hands. In view of the way the *Daily Herald* had repudiated the idea of such a transaction and of Mr. Lansbury’s qualification of the story as “a filthy lie,” one would have expected that the offer now revealed to them would be met with an indignant refusal. Not at all. The *Daily Herald* went on to say :

We wish to have the opinion of our readers as to whether we should accept it? . . .

The offer is a magnificent demonstration of real working-class solidarity . . . to accept it will be to complete a notable episode in international Socialism.

It was finally decided, however, by the directors of the *Daily Herald* that the £75,000 should be refused, but what happened to the money was never revealed.

Meanwhile, again unknown to the ingenuous directors of the paper, another mysterious transaction had taken place. This was the sale in London of some Russian diamonds, obviously stolen, which had found their way into this country. The incident had not escaped the watchful eye of Scotland Yard; investigations were set on foot, the banknotes amounting to £8,000 paid for the jewels were traced to their recipients, two of whom were no other than George Lansbury's son Edgar, and Francis Meynell. At the same time three cheques of £1,500 each payable to the *Daily Herald* were traced to Frederick Strom, the representative of the Bolshevik Government in Stockholm.

But again Mr. George Lansbury and the other directors of the *Daily Herald* had remained in sublime ignorance of the transaction.

The question now arose: Who had brought the diamonds over to England? And who had negotiated the Chinese bonds referred to in the Chicherin-Litvinoff correspondence?

The answer to the first question was eventually supplied by Francis Meynell himself, who boasted to an *Evening News* reporter how he had sent some of the stones to England packed inside chocolate creams, and had brought over others in his mouth. He had talked to Secret Service men on the journey with "the diamonds rattling against his teeth." Inquiries failed to elicit from him what had become of the jewels or of the £75,000 that had remained in his possession. All he would say was that "they had gone back to the movement"—possibly to finance *The Communist*, a paper which he was then editing. An interesting development was the bankruptcy of this enterprising young man a year later, when he was found to be living at the rate of £1,000 a year whilst only earning £700—a striking example of Communist asceticism.

The Labour Party having extricated themselves with some difficulty from the awkward situation in which they had been placed, it now remained for the Russian Trade Delegation to explain the part they had played in the affair. On arrival in this country every member of the Delegation had signed an undertaking not to engage in propaganda; the subsidising of the *Daily Herald* by the Bolshevik Government was a direct violation of this agreement. But the envoys of Moscow proved as resourceful as their allies in this country. Krassin and Kameneff called personally on Mr. Lloyd George to assure him that the offer of £75,000 had been made entirely without their knowledge either, and must have been conveyed through

Copenhagen and Moscow without reference to the Mission. Kameneff spent three hours trying to make Mr. Lloyd George believe this story. To quote Mr. Lloyd George's own account of the interview:

I sent for Kameneff and said: "This is not playing the game—you are here as an emissary from the Government, and for an official emissary of the Government to abuse his position by propagating revolution, discontent, disaffection in the country where he is received is an abuse of hospitality."

Then Kameneff said to me: "It really is not true. I know nothing about it."

But I had in front of me at the moment the identical telegram that he had sent to Moscow stating: "I have disposed of jewels and giving £75,000 to the *Daily Herald*."¹

Proof was, moreover, forthcoming that Chinese bonds had been presented at a London bank for payment by a member of the Russian Trade Delegation.

No further evidence was therefore necessary, and Kameneff was ordered to leave the country. Accordingly on September 11 Kameneff, protesting his innocence, sailed for Christiania, where he met with an effusive welcome from Litvinoff.

Kameneff had perhaps some reason to feel aggrieved. He alone had been made the scapegoat for an affair in which both the British Labour Party and the Russian Trade Delegation were deeply implicated. The evidence in the hands of Scotland Yard was sufficient to hang them both; in other words, to suppress the *Daily Herald*, and to send the Trade Delegation packing without more ado. But to the despair of Sir Basil Thomson, Mr. Lloyd George refused to put the law into action. The Russian Trade Delegation was allowed to remain, and Ministers continued to confer with Krassin as before. The directors of the *Daily Herald*, convicted of dealings with our avowed enemies, were allowed to go scot-free. As usual, it was only the minor instruments who were brought to book. Sylvia Pankhurst, who had been turned down by Lenin, was finally arrested for her attempts to spread sedition in co-operation with foreign revolutionaries, and sentenced in October 1920 to six months' imprisonment. Her accomplice, Colonel L'Estrange Malone, the only member of the Communist Party Executive to be arrested, was condemned in November to the same fate.

The evidence brought forward at both these trials threw a

¹ Speech of Mr. Lloyd George at Camberwell on October 28, 1924.

flood of light on the intrigues that were being carried on between the Communists in Great Britain, the Russian Bolsheviks and the Jewish-American gang in the United States; also on the connection between the last-named and the troubles in Ireland.

In the spring of the following year the British Government received a further warning with regard to Bolshevik intrigues at home and abroad. This information was published in a series of articles by *The Times* of February 1 to 4, 1921, under the heading "Moscow Agents at Work," describing in detail the campaign that was being carried on in Great Britain, on the Continent and in the East. In the first of these, headed with the caption in large letters "Krassin Exposed," an account was given of a Bolshevik Conference which took place on February 26 in the neighbourhood of Bremen. An exposé was given by Julius Fachers, one of the agents for England, in which he stated :

Our expenses in the organisation of centres of agitation in the last half-year amounted to £23,750 sterling per month, not including the extraordinary outlays of the [Kameneff and Krassin] Trade Delegation in London. The necessity for doubling the outlays has been reported by one of the Executive Committee through Krassin, and several times direct. . . . At the present moment there are in the whole of England 79 Communist district organisations, distributed over 26 areas of agitation, etc. . . . new monetary support is needed.

It was in the face of these and other warnings that the Trade Agreement between Great Britain and Russia was finally signed by Sir Robert Horne and Krassin on March 16, 1921.

To complete the farce, a note was handed at the same time to Krassin, containing the most damning allegations on Bolshevik intrigues in the East, particularly in Afghanistan, and demanding that they should cease. What sort of understanding could be built upon this foundation it is impossible to imagine.

The Bolsheviks, too anxious about securing the signature of Great Britain to the Treaty to care about the sentiments that inspired the British Government, were ready to agree to anything—on paper. Chicherin, in his reply on April 20, declared that "the Soviet Government regarded the signature of the agreement as a turning-point in its relations with Great Britain," and that "propaganda against British interests,

particularly in Afghanistan, would be carefully avoided." We shall see in a later chapter how faithfully this pledge was kept.

The question of Russian debts was dealt with in the vaguest manner :

The Russian Government declares that it recognises in principle that it is liable to pay compensation to private persons who have supplied goods or services to Russia for which they have not been paid.

A remarkably elastic form of I.O.U.

It was thus in spite of the distrust for Soviet promises expressed by the Foreign Office, War Office, Chambers of Commerce, Federation of British Industries, and the protests uttered by Members of Parliament, the Conservative Press, British business men and patriotic individuals all over the country, that Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues made this first compact with the bitterest enemies of the British Empire. Questioned in the House of Commons by Sir Clement Kinloch Cooke as to whether the Trade Agreement implied recognition of the Soviet Government, Mr. Lloyd George made no reply. That his silence implied the hope for this further development may be inferred from his subsequent support of the Labour Party in the matter of the diplomatic recognition of Russia, but this was more than the country could be expected to stand at the moment.

What was the explanation of the Government's action at this crisis? What hidden power was at work within its councils? This question was asked by Mr. Harold Williams, whose profound knowledge of Russia and well-known integrity entitled him to speak with authority on the situation. In an eloquent letter to *The Times* of March 17, Mr. Williams spoke of "the cynicism of our present rulers," of "their actions based on the narrowest and most ephemeral expediency." And he ended with the significant words :

Possibly there are occult influences and obscure compacts at whose nature detached observers cannot pretend to guess.

The results were as disastrous as might have been expected. The signing of the agreement was the signal for the Soviet Trade Delegation to spread itself; the two floors in Bond Street were now supplemented by a large five-storied building, 49 Moorgate Street, to be known as "Soviet House," later as

"Arcos," then a building and a half in Lincoln's Inn Fields and a suite of offices in Southampton Row. By the end of the year nearly 300 employees at high salaries were at work in Soviet House alone.

The effects of this new concession to the Bolsheviks were immediate. Just as the formation of the Council of Action had taken place six days after the arrival of Krassin and Kameneff from Russia in the preceding August, a fresh attempt at revolution followed immediately on the signing of the Trade Agreement with Russia.

The date appointed for de-controlling the coal mines had arrived, and the Triple Alliance again threatened a general strike if the subsidy was discontinued. On March 31, 1921, the miners came out on strike, and the railwaymen and transport workers were urged to follow suit. By April 9 the situation had become acute, alarm spread through the country, the reserves were called up and a defence force created. The revolutionaries believed that the "Great Day" had come at last. But at the eleventh hour, on Friday, April 15, the railwaymen and transport workers refused to come out and the general strike was called off. This momentous date was known afterwards in the annals of the "Labour" movement as "Black Friday," because it had failed to plunge the country into chaos.

Throughout this crisis Mr. Lloyd George played a heroic part. On April 8 he made a stirring speech on the "grave peril" threatening the country. "The nation," he declared, "is for the first time in its history confronted by an attempt to coerce it into capitulation by the destruction of its resources. . . . We are fighting for the life of the community, and we will use every resource the community has at its disposal."

On March 23 he had delivered an eloquent address on the "Great Peril" at a luncheon in the House of Commons:

What is that peril? I know there are people who say there is none. It is the phenomenal rise to power of a new party with new purposes of the most subversive character. It calls itself Labour, but it is really Socialist. (Hear, hear.) And even now the real danger is not fully realised. We cannot believe in this new danger. Well, it was just the same with the German danger. Many of us, and I plead guilty myself, were very loath to believe in its existence . . . its real power, its real menace, were not thoroughly understood.

That is full of significance when we consider the new danger. There are those who call it a "bogey." They say it is some

"bogey" which you simply put up and paint just to frighten people. I think Mr. Asquith said so at Blackburn the other night. . . . I see Lord Henry Bentinck also described it as a "bogey" in a speech he delivered on Sunday. He thinks this terrible machine which is tearing parties to pieces on its way to tearing society to pieces is merely a bogey. . . .

Socialism is fighting . . . to destroy everything that the great prophets and leaders of both parties laboured for generations to build up. [So apparently the old world was worth "shoring up," after all!—Author's note.] . . . The new party wants to uproot and to tear up and to plant the wild and poisonous berries of Karl Marxism in this country.

This was magnificent, but why have made a treaty just a week earlier with the purveyors of these berries, enabling them to dispense their poisonous wares without hindrance to the unfortunate inhabitants of this country? Thus, whilst at one moment denouncing Bolshevism with all the eloquence at his command, at the next Mr. Lloyd George constituted himself the defender of the Bolsheviks. Questioned in Parliament—only a fortnight after this address—with regard to the revelations on Bolshevik intrigues in the East that had recently appeared in *The Times*, Mr. Lloyd George replied that he had received from Krassin a categorical denial of the authenticity of the statements in question and the assurance that the document quoted was a forgery. Pressed as to whether he had made inquiries from the newspaper in which they were published, he answered :

We have a good deal of work already. If the Government were to investigate every statement which appeared in the newspapers there would be no end of the bureaucracy that would be set up.¹

So, on the word of the Bolsheviks themselves, revelations of immense importance to the British Empire were to be dismissed as fabrications and no investigations were to be made at the source from which they emanated.

Yet six months later it appeared that they rested on a very solid foundation of truth, for on September 7 a further note was addressed by Lord Curzon to the Soviet Government, embodying precisely the same accusations that had been brought forward in *The Times* articles of February. The note complained of continued Soviet propaganda, aimed at undermining the British Empire and of Soviet intrigues in India, Persia, Turkestan, Angora and Afghanistan. Forestalling

¹ Debate of April 11, 1921.

the usual excuse that the Soviet Government was not responsible for the actions of the Third International, the note insisted on the absolute identity between the two, pointing out that the same people were at the head of both.

The plea indeed that the Soviet Government is one authority and the Third International another . . . is of so transparent a character as not to deceive anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with the case.

As a corollary to the exhaustive indictment that followed, leading up to the inevitable conclusion that the Krassin pact had been broken, one might expect to find a brief intimation that relations between the two countries must be considered at an end. Not at all. His Majesty's Government merely "asks for a definite assurance that the Soviet Government will cause these activities, which constitute breaches of the trade agreement, to cease."

One can imagine the hilarity with which this missive was received in Moscow, and the complacency with which Litvinoff, Deputy People's Commissary for Foreign Affairs, on September 27, replied to the British Government, as Krassin had done six months earlier, that all the documents on which these accusations had been made were based on false information and on forgeries, and repeating that the Soviet Government could not be identified with the Third International. A non-committal reply from the British Government ended the matter, and Chicherin was able to boast openly in the Press of the success that had attended Soviet propaganda in the East. "The Persian people have repudiated the Anglo-Persian agreement . . . the Russian-Persian agreement has been signed. The policy of the Soviet Government has also met with very favourable response in Afghanistan, and consequently the Afghans have repudiated the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, and the British Delegation was compelled to leave Afghanistan and return to London."¹

What is the explanation of the extraordinary subservience displayed by the British Government at this crisis? What was the power that compelled Ministers of the Crown, the legislators of a mighty Empire, to swallow insults, to ignore threats, to disregard warnings and pursue in the face of all opposition their policy of friendship with a relentless foe? Any commercial advantages accruing from the Trade Agree-

¹ *Morning Post*, November 15, 1921.

ment were proved to be negligible by the figures published in the *Financial Times* of October 27, 1921. It is evident, therefore, that a deeper purpose lay behind the scheme which, viewed from the surface, only appears as sheer insanity. Some light may be thrown on the mystery by events that took place at the end of that year.

As early as August a group of British business men had evolved a scheme for resuscitating Russia with German aid, and Mr. Leslie Urquhart, founder of the Russian Asiatic Consolidated Company, visited Berlin and Moscow with a view to Anglo-German co-operation in exploiting the Siberian mines. At the same time a large armament firm in this country was said to have come to an agreement with the Deutsche Bank, Krupps and Thyssen. Mr. Urquhart returned disillusioned and afterwards disassociated himself from plans for trading with Russia, but the scheme continued to receive support in other business circles in this country.

Now it will be remembered that Krassin in his earlier days had been the representative in Russia of the A.E.G. (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft) of which Rathenau was the President and Felix Deutsch the manager, and that this company was intimately connected with the Deutsche Bank, which had an influential backing in the City of London. It is therefore not without significance to find that in the autumn of 1921, Stinnes, also a friend of Krassin's, and Felix Deutsch had also arrived at the conviction that the only way to the financial and economic peace of Europe lay in the creation of a great international syndicate to take in hand the reconstruction of Russia. The question of Germany's indemnity had now just reached a crisis; according to all appearances the Allies, at the forthcoming London Conference, would insist on the payment of reparations due in January. What, then, could be more opportune than an alliance with Great Britain, to exploit Russia to the advantage of both? At the end of November it was announced in the *Vossische Zeitung* that Stinnes, who had just paid a visit to England, had gone there on the invitation of Mr. Lloyd George, and had spent a weekend at Chequers. At the same time Rathenau and Simon arrived in London. The meeting between Mr. Lloyd George and Stinnes was officially denied in Downing Street; nevertheless, the conviction persisted in Germany that the visit of both Rathenau and Stinnes to England "was for the purpose of arranging with the British Government a project for the combined exploitation of Russia by Great Britain and Germany."

The *Morning Post*, from which these words are quoted, expressed the belief that "the Prime Minister is contemplating an Anglo-Russo-German combination which . . . he will urge as the only method of restoring Europe."¹

Through whom could such a project be carried out more effectually than through Krassin? Just at this moment Krassin went to Germany, where "he visited Krupps and other large factories, and conferred at length with Rathenau. . . . It is probable that he conferred at equal length with Stinnes himself."² The authors of the Russian Revolution, as the *Morning Post* pointed out in the previous year, had not set out "to create a prosperous Russia, but to destroy Russia: they have succeeded—and *it remains for the international capitalist, who is the paymaster, to exploit Russia.* . . . It is well known that there are certain syndicates in this country, mainly Jewish, that have all along been willing to trade with Russia."³ Monsieur André Chéradame, who had studied the whole question at first hand during his visits to Eastern Europe, expresses the same opinion. In his remarkable book, *La Mystification des Peuples Alliés*, he showed how the plan for the exploitation of Russia, for which Communism had paved the way by expropriating the native capitalists of the country, had been backed up throughout by the Deutsche Bank which maintained relations with German-Jewish financiers, naturalised as English or American in London and New York. Thus, he added, "Bolshevism leads necessarily to the exploitation of Russia for the profit of a syndicate of super-capitalists, of which the real leaders are Jews and Germans." Rathenau himself had declared:

Three hundred men, all acquainted with each other, control the economic destiny of the Continent.

Rathenau was one of the three hundred. He was associated at that time with eighty-four large concerns, either as a member of the supervising board or as a managing director.

Was it a mere coincidence that in the spring of this year Lenin had announced at the Congress of the Russian Communist Party, that in view of the slow development of the revolutionary movement throughout the world "the Soviet Government is considering the question of the necessity for an agreement with the bourgeois Governments, which would result in the granting of concessions to foreign capitalists in

¹ Date of December 16, 1921.

² *Morning Post*, March 19, 1921.

³ *Evening News*, January 11, 1922.

Russia" ? This change of front, known as the "New Economic Policy," which must have raised a storm of opposition had it been propounded by anyone with less powerful influences at his back than Lenin, was clearly carried out "according to plan." Mr. Lloyd George used it a fortnight later in the House as an argument for trading with the Bolsheviki.¹

Viewed from this angle, the Trade Agreement with Great Britain and Russia in 1921 takes on a different aspect. No longer a compact with a derelict Empire, but with the most formidable Power in the world, the Power of International Finance, it is seen not as an act of folly, but as a surrender to forces with which its authors were either unable or unwilling to contend. And as will be shown later, Mr. Lloyd George was not the only politician, outside the ranks of the Labour Party, to yield to pressure exercised from the same quarter. The whole of this affair must be studied in conjunction with what was going on at the Allied Conferences in order to realise the intimate connection between German reparations, relations with Russia and Labour troubles in England. Again a brief chronological résumé of events may help to make this clear.

In February and March 1921 the London Conference of the Allies had discussed the question of the German indemnity with Simon and Stinnes, and decided to occupy the right bank of the Rhine in the event of Germany defaulting.

On March 7 Lenin announced his New Economic Policy.

On March 8 Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Ruhrort were occupied by the Allies.

On March 16 the Trade Agreement was signed between Great Britain and Russia.

On March 31 the great coal strike began in England, leading up to the crisis of April 15, when the general strike was averted.

On April 30 the London Conference of Allied Statesmen took place, at which Germany's indemnity was finally fixed and the decision was taken to occupy the Ruhr, that is to say the centre of the German coal industry, in the event of Germany defaulting.

On May 10 Germany agreed to the terms imposed.

At the end of November Stinnes and Rathenau visited London.

On November 28 the *Daily Herald* (as already quoted) announced that an Anglo-German Entente was in contemplation, and that the scheme was being studied at the Foreign Office and in the Wilhelmstrasse.

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, March 22, 1921.

In December the German Government declared itself bankrupt and unable to pay the instalments agreed upon in May.

From this point we will follow Mr. Lloyd George to the Conferences at Cannes and Geneva, already referred to in a preceding chapter, but now in the light of the Russian as well as the German question.

The Cannes Conference which took place from January 6-13, 1922, was ostensibly a meeting of the Allies—England, France and Belgium—to discuss Germany's inability to pay. But on January 10 the *Morning Post* correspondent in Paris reported that "envoys of the Moscow Government left Paris last Friday for Cannes. During their stay in Cannes, one at least of these envoys has been in confidential communication with the personal representatives of Mr. Lloyd George, and, I am credibly informed, with the Prime Minister himself. These statements will probably be officially denied, but for that I am quite prepared. This envoy is described as 'a well-known Russian lawyer,' not an extreme Communist, and probably for this reason he was selected to get into touch with the head of the British Government at Cannes." The *Morning Post* correspondent goes on to say :

I understand that this individual received his instructions to go to Cannes from Krassin himself, who appears to have been remarkably well informed as to the manner in which Mr. Lloyd George would arrange his programme for the Supreme Council. It is significant that the Bolshevik delegates during their stay at Cannes have been able to keep their presence an absolute secret from the Press of the entire world. . . .

I understand that during their stay at Cannes the Soviet delegates have also been in conference with certain confidential representatives of Germany. The belief appears to prevail among both Russians and Germans that Mr. Lloyd George is now very much inclined to be less generous to Germany and much more generous to Russia.¹

The report added that some days before Mr. Lloyd George left London for Cannes he received an offer from the Russian Government to abandon all pretence at Communism in return for recognition by Great Britain and France, and the arrangement of "a big international loan for the benefit of Russia . . . It is believed that the British Premier went to Cannes with his plans for the restoration of Russia ready in his pocket, thanks to his previous conferences with people in the confidence of the Soviet leaders."

¹ *Morning Post*, January 11, 1922.

Whether owing to the recall of Briand or to other causes, this plan did not mature at Cannes, and when the Powers next met at Genoa in April, Poincaré was at the helm of the French Government and had dispatched Barthou to the Conference with very precise instructions which certainly did not include recognition of the Bolshevik Government of which the representatives were present on this occasion.

The Russian Delegation of thirty-three, including Chicherin, Litvinov, Joffe, Rakovsky, Krassin and his secretary Solomon Schweth, together with their inevitable following of clerks and typists, bringing the total number up to over fifty, took up their quarters discreetly at Santa Margherita, some eighteen miles from Genoa. Thither Mr. Lloyd George's motor-car might be seen on spring evenings wending its way, for Mr. Lloyd George particularly affected the scenery of this charming spot, and is said on several occasions, whilst admiring the view, to have found Chicherin engaged in the same pursuit.

The luncheon party, given by Mr. Lloyd George to the Bolshevik Delegation at the Villa d'Albertis where he was staying, ended, however, in something of a fiasco. Approached on the thorny subject of Russian debts amounting approximately to £2,600,000,000, the Bolsheviks startled their host by the amazing proposal of a counter-claim of £5,000,000,000 for damages incurred by Allied intervention and the expeditions of Koltchak and Denikin.

Meanwhile, other members of the British Delegation were endeavouring to win over the Germans. The *rapprochement* between the British, the Germans and the Bolsheviks indeed became so apparent that the French, who had never hoped much from the Conference, found themselves out in the cold. Monsieur Jules Sauerwein of the *Matin* described a garden party given by Monsieur Theodor Wolff, editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, to which all the journalists, except the French, were invited.

"Who held the floor? Two Englishmen, the economist Keynes and the editor of the *Observer*, Mr. Garvin, and finally Monsieur Rathenau. Of the three Monsieur Rathenau was the most moderate. When Mr. Garvin spoke of the collapse of the Entente, Monsieur Rathenau coyly turned away his head. When Mr. Keynes spoke of the impossibility for Germany to pay, Monsieur Rathenau gently but firmly contradicted him, declaring that Germany *wished* to pay."

Alas! these blandishments availed nothing. Whilst the British Delegation had been enjoying the amenities of the Hotel Miramare and gliding in luxurious motor-cars about

"the land where it is always afternoon," the Germans and Russians had been hard at work, and suddenly sprang on the Allies the announcement that, in defiance of the other Powers represented at the Conference, they had signed a treaty with each other at Rapallo on April 16. To those who knew the close co-operation which had throughout existed between Germany and the Bolsheviks, the news came less as a surprise than to the statesmen who persisted in regarding Bolshevism as a purely Russian movement. As I wrote at the time, "the secret liaison has now been followed by a hasty marriage at a registry—that is all."¹

The issues were now quite clear. Germany and Bolshevik Russia stood together, openly, against the rest of the world. It is significant to notice that the same individuals in the countries of the Allies, who were all for "letting Germany down gently," were also for coming to an understanding with the Bolsheviks. They had been so all along.

I do not here intend to cast any aspersion on the good faith of the British business men and statesmen who held these views; doubtless according to their lights they acted in the interests of their country. Just as at the outbreak of the War, the idea prevailed in the City that to close down the German banks would result in a financial crash, it was believed after the War in the same quarter that it was necessary for the financial restoration of Europe to "put Germany on her feet again."² That this would put England on her back did not seem to occur to the business men who advocated this policy and are now lamenting the decay of British industry. Accustomed to go to international financiers for advice, they did not dream that they were listening to false counsel, nor were they sufficiently informed of the *dessous des cartes* of international politics to realise the intrigues that were at work. To them Germany was no longer an enemy, but a once hostile power whose military system had been broken up, and who must now be restored to prosperity and received into the comity of nations. That Germany was not disarmed, that she was still working against us in all parts of the world—in Ireland, in Egypt, in India—was an idea that never occurred to them for a moment. This is a point that will become more apparent in the following chapter.

¹ Boche and Bolshevik articles in *Morning Post* of April 26 and 27, 1922.

² See excellent reply to this view of the case by Lord Rothermere in the *Sunday Pictorial* of December 18, 1921, showing that Germany could pay a large proportion of her debt in raw materials.

CHAPTER VII

THE SURRENDER TO SINN FEIN

THE political crisis that arose shortly after the Genoa Conference and culminated in the break-up of the Coalition Government, centred mainly round the Irish question. The enemies of England had always exploited Irish discontent from the days of the French Revolution onwards. I have shown elsewhere¹ the way the same policy was pursued throughout the nineteenth century, by the promoters of world revolution, who saw in England the chief obstacle to their plan of total subversion, and how "the dark directory of atheism" on the Continent enlisted the aid of Irish Catholics so as "to strangle the last king with the entrails of the last priest."

It is not my purpose to enter into the question of the rights and wrongs of the Irish Nationalist movement which was so clearly differentiated from the International Revolutionary movement by Mr. Dawson in his book *Red Terror and Green*—red signifying Bolshevism and green Sinn Fein. But to complete the simile, it would be necessary to introduce a third colour, which might be described as the Black Power—the secret German intrigue to destroy the power of England by stirring up revolt in Ireland as in other parts of the British Empire.

The Black intrigue was apparently quite distinct from the Red, and both began long before Bolshevism came into power in Russia. The Red, as has been said, had continued from the middle of the nineteenth century, when Karl Marx and his associates of the First International adopted Ireland as the point of attack on England. The Black, on the other hand, was Imperialist and formed a part of the great pan-German scheme, drawing its inspiration from the old German secret societies referred to in an earlier chapter of this book.

The first visible evidence of an understanding between

¹ *World Revolution* (1921), pp. 75-8, 242-4.

German Imperialism and the Irish revolutionary movement was seen in 1911, when a series of articles by Roger Casement appeared in seditious Irish newspapers and various organs of the Irish American press in the United States, urging a German-Irish Alliance in the event of war between Germany and England. In 1912 the first of these articles was translated and widely circulated in Germany, and immediately after the outbreak of war, Casement and Kuno Meyer, who had been Professor of Celtic Languages in Liverpool University, brought out these articles and others in the form of a pamphlet entitled, *Ireland, Germany and the Freedom of the Seas*. In the introduction by the two collaborators it was stated that :

The whole six parts furnish in outline the case for a German-Irish alliance as this presented itself to the writer's mind when the world was at peace. . . . As a contribution to the cause of Germany, friend of Ireland and foe of England, is now published.

That anyone could seriously believe Germany to be sympathetic to Irish aspirations is incredible. It would be impossible to imagine any races more temperamentally incapable of understanding each other than the idle, dreaming, happy-go-lucky Irish and the industrious, practical and hard-headed Germans. This is how Professor Kuno Meyer himself had written about the Irish before the War :

I look upon them precisely as we Germans regard the Poles—a people fit only for poetry, rhetoric and sedition, an ill-balanced, emotional race, unfitted for any form of self-government.

Presumably the Germans hoped to govern Ireland themselves and in a very different manner from the British. The landing of the German Army Corps in Ireland, as arranged with Casement, would doubtless have cured the Irish of any illusions on the subject of German "friendship."

When the War broke out Casement was in America and in close touch with John Devoy, the secretary of the Clann-na-Gael, a federation of revolutionary associations formed by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret society founded in 1861 as the successor to the Fenian Society of which Devoy had formerly been a leader. At the same time Devoy acted as the link between Germany and Sinn Fein, working directly under von Skal and von Igel on the staff of Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to the United States. A telegram from the German Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Office in Berlin, on October 1, 1914, announced that Roger

Casement, together with Michael Collins, was starting for Germany to visit the Irish prisoners. Casement, after his arrival in Berlin, wrote to his friends in Dublin telling them to trust the Germans, and saying that "every man at home must stand for Germany and Irish Freedom." The important point to remember is that it was not with democrats or believers in liberty that Casement was intriguing, but with the German Imperial Government, the most autocratic of all governments, ruling the native populations in its colonies with a rod of iron.

In February 1915 Albert Sander, a German spy who had offices at 150 Nassau Street, New York, started a pro-German society called "The Friends of Peace," in order to hamper the export of arms to the Allies and to keep America out of the War. This was linked up with the Clan-na-Gael, the Socialist Party of New York and a number of other pro-German societies. Sander was arrested in 1917 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

In February 1916 another organisation was launched in New York called "The Friends of Irish Freedom," an off-shoot of the Clan-na-Gael, with branches in Berlin and Stockholm, which worked in touch with the German Government until the Armistice. The propaganda carried on by these groups brought a number of the Irish over to the German cause. Admiral Sims of the American Navy, describing the hostility encountered by American sailors in Ireland towards the end of the War, wrote :

The fact is that the part of Ireland in which the Americans were stationed was the headquarters of Sinn Fein members. This organisation was not only openly disloyal but openly pro-German. They were not even neutral, but were working day and night for a German victory. In their misguided minds a German victory signified an Irish Republic. It was no secret the Sinn Feiners sending information to Germany, and constantly laying plots to interfere with the British-American navies. . . . They did everything in their power to help Germany. With their assistance German spies landed in Ireland.¹

The Easter rebellion which broke out on April 24, 1916, was organised by the Irish rebels in conjunction with the German Government. The plan was to carry out, simultaneously with the rising, an air-raid on England and a naval attack followed by a landing of troops and munitions. The

¹ Article by Admiral Sims in the *World's Work Magazine* (American), quoted in the *Evening Standard*, November 5, 1919.

Zeppelin raids on East Anglia on April 24 and on Essex and Kent on the 25th, as also the naval raid on Lowestoft the same day, were carried out according to plan, but the German ship, the *Aud*, carrying arms to the Irish rebels was sunk by a British cruiser. Casement, who was returning from Kiel, was captured on landing on the coast of Kerry and the Dublin rebellion was suppressed in six days. The Germans were probably not sorry to be rid of Casement, for, as John Devoy's correspondence stated, they had grown "weary of his impracticable dreams," whilst Casement in his turn had at last reached the very obvious conclusion that "Germany was not sincere."¹

In spite of this failure Germany continued to concentrate attention on Ireland with a view to using her coast for submarine bases preparatory to an attack on England, and enormous quantities of petrol were stored at Foynes, near Limerick. These intrigues were known to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Birrell, who, as early as December 1915, was officially notified that the Sinn Feiners were arming and that sedition was rampant. But no action was taken. When, after the Easter rebellion, he resigned his post, he explained his attitude by saying that he had "made an untrue estimate of the Sinn Fein movement,"² but expressed no contrition, although the Report of the Royal Commission on Ireland stated that :

We are of the opinion that the Chief Secretary as the administrative head of the Government in Ireland is primarily responsible for the situation that was allowed to arise and the outbreak that occurred.³

It was at this juncture that Mr. Asquith went over to Dublin, where he stayed a week, making himself very pleasant to the rebels whom he visited in prison. "Stories of his sympathetic attitude were passed from mouth to mouth all over disaffected Ireland, with the natural consequence that membership of Sinn Fein grew by leaps and bounds."⁴

In the Report of the Royal Commission it was further stated that :

the main cause of the Rebellion appears to be that lawlessness was allowed to grow up unchecked, and that Ireland for several

¹ White Paper, *Documents relative to the Sinn Fein Movement* (1921), Cmd. 1108.

² *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. lxxxii., col. 33.

³ White Paper, Cmd. 8279, p. 13.

⁴ "The Truth about Ireland" in *Morning Post*, October 31, 1921.

years past has been administered on the principle that it was safer and more expedient to leave law in abeyance if collision with any fraction of the Irish people could thereby be avoided.

It was hoped that the Coalition Government which came into power eight months later (December 7, 1916) would take a stronger line, but Mr. Lloyd George, regardless of the need for unity between Great Britain and Ireland at such a crisis, persisted with the policy of Home Rule whilst in the middle of the War and whilst the Sinn Feiners were still carrying on treasonable negotiations with the Germans for landing arms in the country and attempting to bring about another rebellion. A Convention of Irishmen of all parties was called in order to draw up a policy of "self-government," and by way of placating the rebels, all the prisoners who had taken part in the rebellion were released. The answer to this was a fresh outbreak of agitation in favour of an independent republic, led by de Valera. A rising threatened for April 1918, however, stirred the British Government to action; de Valera was arrested, the Home Rule Bill was temporarily dropped, but so was also conscription, although a Military Service Bill for Ireland had already been passed. This failure to enforce conscription—as Lord Roberts and those who understood the Irish urged unceasingly—was perhaps the greatest mistake made by England with regard to Ireland during the War. But for this, cries of "Up the Kaiser!" might never have been heard in Ireland and the rebellion of 1916 have been averted. For the agitators were clever enough to make capital out of this action by representing it as an insult to a race that had provided so many gallant fighters in the British cause, and the Irish were made to believe that England did not conscript them because they were not considered good enough to fight in her armies. In this sort of mischief-making German propagandists have always excelled.

After the entry of America into the War on April 5, 1917, the official line of communication between the Irish revolutionaries in that country and the German Government was temporarily broken, but a messenger service was maintained by John Devoy. At the same time a new organisation was founded in Berlin, named the "German-Irish Society," devoted to furthering the cause of Sinn Fein and encouraging Indian as well as Irish sedition. The presidents were Herr Mathias Erzberger, Baron von Reichthofen and the Graf von Westarp, now a leader of the German Nationalists. The

society received messages wishing it success from the Kaiser, General Ludendorff and Zimmermann, then Foreign Secretary.

On March 17, that is to say, on the eve of the great German offensive, a meeting of the German-Irish Society was held at the Hotel Adlon in Berlin under the auspices of the German Government. The meeting was addressed at length by Freiherr von Stumm, representing the Imperial Foreign Office, representatives of the German War Office and Admiralty were present, also Abdul Malitch Haniza Bey, of the Committee of Egyptian Nationalists and Young Turks Organisation in Berne; Datta Bhupendranath, alias Dutt, head of the Berlin Indians during the War, concerned in seditious publications against Great Britain; Champakaraman Pillai, a well-known agitator, and a number of other Indian and Egyptian sedition mongers. Dr. Chatterton-Hill and St. John Gaffney, representing Sinn Fein, were also present. Messages of congratulation were received from the Kaiser and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.

This incident is of particular interest as showing the intimate connection between Imperial Germany and the world revolutionaries, who later came to be regarded as simply the agents of Moscow, and it is here that we can trace the origins of a society now known as the "League against Imperialism," habitually attributed to Bolshevist inspiration.

Champakaraman Pillai, referred to above, was at this time the secretary of an organisation known as the V.V.V. Now it will be remembered that in Chapter II of this book these same initials were given as those of the German Monarchist group of societies known as the Vereinigten Vaterländischen Verbände. But with the intent to confuse habitual to secret society organisation, another association had been created by the Germans with the same initials, but signifying Vereinigung Vergewältigter Völker, or the "League of Oppressed Peoples." This had been founded in the United States under the name of the "League of Small and Subject Nationalities" by Dudley Field Malone, attorney for Ludwig Martens, who was afterwards appointed Bolshevist ambassador to the United States by Chicherin. Aleister Crowley, the well-known Satanist, who was then working in the United States for Germany, was connected with this association through one of its agents in America, and under this influence wrote an obscene libel on the King and a glorification of the Kaiser. After the Armistice the society became the "League of Oppressed Peoples," a name coined by the Germans who had

declared themselves to be "the champions of the numerous oppressed peoples of the British Empire."¹ In 1920 its headquarters were moved to Berlin by a mysterious American, subsidiser of a defeatist paper in Switzerland, acting under the direct orders of a powerful pan-German secret society—the Druidenorden, already mentioned in Chapter II, an atheistical subversive international society organised on Masonic lines, of which the origins could be traced back to 1700 when it was allied with the "Old Paladins." This organisation, so secret that its very existence was unknown to the German public, was the real power behind "Organisation C" and the murder gangs described earlier in this book. The Munich lodge of the Order was the chief centre of direction where deliberations were held, whilst Frankfurt was the central registry. The National Club in Berlin, which was the administrative head or War Office of the Monarchist movement, was also believed to be under its direction.

The Grand Master of the Order was stated to be a certain German industrialist, but in reality the Head was probably someone very much more important, possibly no other than the former Foreign Minister, Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau, who, after the Germano-Bolshevik Treaty at Rapallo, was sent to Moscow as German Ambassador, where he endeared himself to the heads of the Soviet Government and died in 1928.

The Druidenorden was the concrete expression of the idea before referred to as that of the "Eastern School" of German Monarchists, who believed in coming to an understanding with Soviet Russia for the purpose of a war of revenge against the Allies or, failing this, of undermining them by revolutionary propaganda, particularly throughout the British Empire.² This section of German Monarchists never ceased to co-operate

¹ *Kölnische Zeitung* (a German Government organ), July 8, 1918.

² According to the Bolsheviks this remained to the end, the idea of von Brockdorff-Rantzau. The *Pravda* of September 11, 1928, after asking how the Count, "the oldest, the haughtiest of German aristocrats," made himself so popular in Moscow, went on to say:

"Was it perhaps that sympathy for Bolshevism awoke in the old Count in the twilight of his life? . . . Not in the least . . . Red Counts do not exist. It is nonsense. Rantzau was and remained to his last breath foudal, a nobleman, a Monarchist, and, by conviction a Right Nationalist. But he understood one important thing that was true—only one, but it was enough for him—Rantzau understood that the U.S.S.R. is the only country where they know there is a stronger beast than the Entente, the only country of which the Government talks to the present masters of Europe as equal to equal. 'Do not quarrel but make friends, do not draw back but draw nearer, and if possible lean on such a country.' This is what seemed to the old man the most important, the most necessary for the country which he represented."

with the Bolsheviks after Lenin and his companions in the sealed train were sent by them to Russia ; and the marvellous organisation of Soviet propaganda abroad has been largely attributable to the German as well as the Jewish brains behind it.

Up till about 1922 the activities of this German group and the Soviet Government were indistinguishable. Radek, alias Sobelssohn, acted as the link between Berlin and Moscow. The Druidenorden, like the Komintern, was internationally organised, with lodges in Rome, Milan, Prague, Budapest and ramifications in England, France, Holland, Italy, Algeria, Canada, Egypt, India, Vladivostock and Japan. At the same time it had two important centres in Switzerland—at Zurich and Lugano—under Baron von A. and Baron von D., who co-operated with the Soviet agents in that country by supplying revolutionaries throughout the world with arms, ammunition and propaganda, Bolshevik, pro-German and anti-Entente.¹ It was in Switzerland that some of the British delegates to the Conference of the Second International at Berne in 1919 were entertained, doubtless unknown to them, by an associate of the Druidenorden.

This inner secret society was behind the Moplah risings in India in 1921, and it was again the Druidenorden that recruited revolutionary Jews in Germany, and passed them through Switzerland via Milan and Genoa to Palestine, in order to stir up feeling against Great Britain.

There was also a direct connection between the Druidenorden and the I.R.B. (Irish Republican Brotherhood), though relations with Ireland were principally maintained through the V.V.V. and its agents in America. Thus, when the headquarters of the V.V.V. were moved to Berlin in 1920, the way had already been paved by the German Irish Society and the secretary of the V.V.V., Champakaraman Pillai, in that city. In January of that year a meeting was held at the house of Count Reventlow at which several of the same people were present as at the meeting of the German-Irish society of March 17, 1918, referred to a few pages earlier—notably Dr. Chatterton-Hill and Champakaraman Pillai. The same mysterious American was there with a Hungarian from Geneva, and there were also present Sheikh Abdul Abdil Shauish, representing the Egyptian Nationalists and two Turks—Nazim Bey and Shekib Arslan Bey. A plan was drawn up at this

¹ An interesting account of this centre of conspiracy in Switzerland was given in the *Morning Post* of September 1, 1920.

meeting for reorganising the V.V.V. as an International League against British and French "Imperialism," but particularly against the British Empire.

It is important to note that at this stage the Soviet Government took no part in the movement, which was purely an alliance between a section of German Monarchists and the enemies of Great Britain. Dr. Chatterton-Hill, who, after the German revolution of November 1918, tried to get into touch with Bolshevist circles in Germany and Switzerland, found the Bolsheviks unreceptive to his scheme of co-operation between Irish Republicanism and Russian Communism. It is obvious the two ideas would not blend. Nor was Moscow inclined to support, or at any rate to finance, the programme of the V.V.V. in which Communist propaganda was not included. Gradually, however, the Bolsheviks came to realise the utility of this organisation as a means for furthering the aims of world revolution by destroying British power in India, Egypt and Ireland, and when a further meeting took place in Berlin in October 1920, Moscow had decided that Berlin should remain the centre of the Germano-Bolshevik movement in the West, where all the wires connecting anti-British and anti-Entente movements in Ireland, India and Egypt should join. An office was taken in Charlottenburg under the name of a trading company which did not exist, but consisted simply of the committee of the movement. It was said that here also the five men composing the inner circle of the Druidenorden met, masked and under assumed names, in the deepest secrecy, in an underground chamber at dead of night after the manner of the Vehmgerichts.

In 1922 the V.V.V. formed a further section, the "League of Oppressed Peoples of the East," known as the L.N.O.O (Ligue des Nations Opprimées de l'Orient), which held its first sitting in Rome. A number of leading Turks and Egyptians were present, at which a programme was drawn up for propaganda all over the East, and a centre was formed in Rome to co-operate with the real centre in Berlin. Abdul Hamid was elected President with Shekib Arslan Bey as secretary.

It is important to understand that this organisation, the V.V.V., later to be known as the "League against Colonial Oppression," and still later as the "League against Imperialism," usually attributed to Moscow, is of German Monarchist origin, formed in the first instance, not for Communist propaganda, but for propaganda against French and still more British "Imperialism." It was not the Bolsheviks, but the Germans

who, having lost their own colonies in the War, first conceived the idea of rousing the peoples of the East against their Western rulers, and raised the cry of "colonial oppression," which no Power had exercised more harshly than Germany herself in dealing with the Herreros. It was the German Monarchists who had united the enemies of Great Britain in the German-Irish Society, which provided the nucleus for the V.V.V. and brought Irish and Indian agitators in touch with each other. It was not, in fact, until after the meeting of the V.V.V. in Berlin in January 1920, when Moscow began to take an interest in the Irish Republican movement, that in June of that year the draft of a treaty was drawn up between Sinn Fein and the Soviet Republic. This *rapprochement* synchronised with an intensified campaign of assassination on the part of the Sinn Feiners; during the first four months of 1920 more murders and attempts at murder of policemen, soldiers and civilians were carried out than in the preceding three and a half years following the rebellion of 1916. This state of affairs grew worse as the year went on.

The revolutionary movement in Ireland was, however, too permeated with nationalism and religious fanaticism for Bolshevik doctrines to make great headway there. The Socialist Party of Ireland, founded in 1904 to propagate the doctrines of Karl Marx, never attained to any importance. In 1919, after the foundation of the Third International, the S.P.I. became the Communist Party of Ireland under Roderick Conolly, son of the old agitator James Conolly. This group was in direct touch with Russia through another well-known agitator Jim Larkin, who was eventually given a place on the Presidium of the IKKI (Executive Committee of the Communist International) in Moscow.

But the C.P.I. again made little headway. The real force of the Red Power that made itself felt in Ireland throughout the Terror of 1919-23, was centred not in the open Communist Party, but in the secret organisation, the "Irish Communist Brotherhood," founded in December 1920 by members of the I.R.B. (Irish Republican Brotherhood), the I.R.A. (Irish Republican Army) and of other revolutionary circles in America and elsewhere. The I.C.B. thus formed the point of contact between the Black and the Red Powers—the Nationalists of Germany and the Bolsheviks of Russia—both working on the national feelings of the Green elements and exploiting their natural tendency to violence. This was all the easier since Ireland, like Germany, had always been a hotbed of secret

societies and the methods of the Vehmgericht had long been practised by the Fenians and kindred societies in Ireland. It is interesting to note that the year of 1921, which marked the climax of the Terror in Ireland, was also the year in which the campaign of political assassinations in Germany, described earlier in this book, reached its height with 400 murders in the course of the year. Can it be doubted that the same power was behind them both—the terrible and secret power of the "Holy Vehme"—and that the motive in both cases was the same, a war of revenge carried out by the German Nationalists against England in Ireland and against the democratic elements in Germany, whom the Nationalist leaders held responsible for their defeat in the Great War? For the purpose of weakening England, the German Nationalists pursued their usual policy of co-operation with the International Communists. This was carried out mainly through the Fraina-Ruthenberg group of American-Jewish Communists, who were in touch with Moscow on one hand and with the revolutionary elements in England and Ireland on the other. The interlocking between the Germans, the English Communists, the I.R.B. and Communist Party of America was shown at the trial of Sylvia Pankhurst, who at one period—just before the foundation of the C.P.G.B.—was in the thick of the Bolshevik conspiracy.

An interesting point here is the question of funds with which the movement everywhere seemed to be plentifully supplied. A German writer on the Terrorist movement in his own country surmised that certain leading German industrialists had contributed to the cost of arms and ammunition,¹ and according to inside information on the Irish question considerable sums found their way from Germany to Ireland through a certain Jewish tradesman in Dublin. At the same time direct communication between Germany and Ireland was kept up by couriers; arms were shipped from Germany to the rebels, who were also supplied with German pom-pom guns and assisted by German instructors. Two engineers were brought over from Krupp's to join the Irregular troops for the purpose of destroying the ten-arch railway bridge at Mallow. From intercepted correspondence that passed between the heads of the conspiracy, it was clear that the real direction came not from Moscow, but from Germany and America. The trend of this was to the effect that Moscow did not know how to organise, that the Third International was "backboneless," but that things were going well in Germany, and that

¹ E. J. Gumbel, *Vier Jahre Politischer Mord*, p. 134.

when the time came Russia and the British revolutionaries would be shown "what *real* organisation could do."

In view of these intrigues it is obvious that weakness displayed towards the rebellion in Ireland was not a concession to Irish Nationalism, but to the German and German-Jewish conspiracy against the British Empire. Whatever might be said in favour of Home Rule, this was no time to confer it when the Irish, once released from English control, were liable to fall a prey to alien domination.

Directly the War ended the Sinn Feiners had formed their own Parliament, "Dail Eireann," with de Valera, who had escaped from prison, at its head, and a campaign of terrorism began. It was in the midst of this that Mr. Lloyd George saw fit to bring in a new Home Rule Bill on February 25, 1920, which became law on December 23 of the same year. His inconsequence can be best appreciated by a few extracts from the speech he had made at Carnarvon two months earlier—on October 9, 1920:

Ireland was a real peril [during the War]. They were in touch with German submarines. There it stands at the gateway of Britain. I saw a map the other day that was captured—a German map circulated to show how Britain was having her fleet destroyed—and the coast of Ireland was black with British ships they had sunk in the Atlantic, in the Irish Sea, in the St. George's Channel. It is girdled with British wrecks. And we are to hand over Ireland to be made a base of the submarine fleet, and we are to trust to luck in the next war. Was there ever such lunacy proposed by anybody?

Then Mr. Lloyd George went on to speak of the Rebellion:

In 1916 they were shooting down in the streets of Dublin British soldiers, many of them not recovered from wounds received in the War. In 1917 and 1918 they were conspiring with German submarines, and we discovered documents in the pockets of men who were arrested in 1918, showing they were prepared, within two months of a German offensive that they knew of, to raise a huge force in Ireland to stab Britain in the back when it was engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the freedom of the world. What a change! You are asked to trust the destinies of Britain and the Empire to people who are apt to get fits of passion that sweep away all reason and make them swing violently from one extreme to another in the middle of a great conflict.

These "fits of passion" were just now expressing themselves in some of the most cold-blooded murders and inhuman

crimes ever recorded in the history of the civilised world. Between January 1, 1919, and May 7, 1921, 309 policemen, 102 soldiers and 124 civilians were killed. On November 21, 1920, a massacre of officers was carried out in Dublin, the murderers entering their bedrooms and slaughtering them before the eyes of their wives. A week later fifteen members of the Auxiliary Police were ambushed and massacred near Macroom ; the dead and wounded were hacked about the heads with axes, shot-guns were fired into their bodies, and they were savagely mutilated. Neither sex nor age was spared ; an old lady, Mrs. Lindsay, together with her chauffeur, was kidnapped and finally murdered for having warned a party of police that an ambush was being prepared for them.

It is unnecessary to enlarge on the tale of horrors ; the point to note is the amazing supineness of the British Government throughout the crisis—a supineness that inevitably led to reprisals on the part of the forces of the Crown who, on occasion, finding themselves insufficiently supported, took the law into their own hands and avenged their murdered comrades. It was the story of all revolutions ; violence begets violence, and so a vicious circle is created to which only wise and firm legislation can put a stop. This was unhappily lacking ; Mr. Lloyd George, in spite of his Carnarvon speech, apparently came to the conclusion that instead of supporting Ulster and the Loyalists in the South of Ireland, the only way out of the difficulty was to come to terms with the rebels. Accordingly a “ truce ” was arranged, and a Conference took place at 10 Downing Street on October 11, 1921, at which Sinn Fein was represented by its earliest exponent, Arthur Griffith, by Michael Collins, head of the I.R.A. which organised the murder gangs, R. C. Barton, who had been imprisoned for sedition, Gavan Duffy, a friend of Casement's, E. J. Duggan, Erskine Childers and John Chartres. These were the men responsible for what Mr. Lloyd George in his Carnarvon speech had described as “ a conspiracy organised and enforced by intimidation and terror,” the instigators of “ a small body of assassins, a real murder gang who were dominating the country and terrorising it.” Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, he had further pointed out, had “ vowed the destruction of this country.”

Yet now, although no contrition had been expressed by the perpetrators of these deeds, Mr. Lloyd George was ready not merely to parley with them, but to welcome them as honoured guests to Downing Street. After the first Conference, said the

Star of that date, Mr. Lloyd George "genially asked the Irishmen as well as his own colleagues to stay to tea. . . . The Irish visitors made themselves at home, and for twenty minutes the tea party proceeded, not only without formality of any kind, but with the utmost cordiality. Conversation was general, and although smoking is not permitted during Cabinet meetings, the Premier handed cigars all round, and the whole company 'lit up.' " There was no question about the "hospitality of the British Government." The little diversion was a personal gesture of the Prime Minister, and was appreciated by the Sinn Feiners as such.

The Premier and Michael Collins appeared to strike sympathetic chords, a fact which was pleasantly apparent to everybody in the room.

Such was the reception given to the men who, according to the Press Association, quoted that evening by a Radical newspaper, arrived at Downing Street "in Rolls-Royce cars . . . attended by their own gunmen. Each car, it is stated, had its armed guard and the arms could be plainly seen in the men's pockets as they mounted to the seats beside the driver."

Meanwhile, "Irish sympathisers shouted, 'Shall we have a Republic?' and they themselves supplied the answer 'Yes!' 'Up the rebels!' was heard, 'God save Ireland' was sung and Sinn Fein flags were waved."

During the months from October 1921 until the spring of 1922, those of us who lived in the neighbourhood of Hans Place and Cadogan Gardens, where the Sinn Fein Delegates took up their luxurious abodes, endured the unspeakable humiliation of seeing daily the men whose hands were red with the blood of our compatriots and of loyal Irishmen, lolling back in magnificent motor-cars as they drove about the streets in the perfect security conferred by the British forces of law and order, which they were doing their utmost to destroy in their own country.

I write here with no prejudice against the Irish people. In the peaceful past before the War I spent many happy days in Ireland, and always met with the utmost cordiality from the people, whose wit and kindness charmed me. There seemed then to be no hostility towards the English, and if one asked where lay the Irish grievances about which one read in the Press, the answer usually related to something that happened

in the days of Cromwell. My own experience, added to the documentary evidence quoted in this chapter, convinces me that the Irish revolutionary movement of 1916-22 was artificially engineered by the enemies of Great Britain, who cared nothing for the sufferings they inflicted on the Irish people, provided they could turn them to their own ends. It was the duty of the British Government to protect them against these influences. The surrender to Sinn Fein was not only a betrayal of Ulster and of the Southern Irish Loyalists, but of the Irish people as a whole. That Mr. Lloyd George, always prone to say one thing and do another, should have been influenced or intimidated into committing this folly is comprehensible. That the Liberals as a party, accustomed to act on theory and to disregard facts, should have approved it is also not surprising. "Home Rule for Ireland," whatever the consequences, had always been their slogan. But that so-called Unionists whose name stood for the very principle they abjured—the Union of Great Britain and Ireland—should have been a party to the great surrender was an event that stirred the loyal elements in this country to the depths. It was a surrender to violence, a confession that a once proud country, the head of a mighty Empire, could be made to yield to the bomb, the rifle and the assassin's knife; it was a direct encouragement to every malcontent in Eastern lands to defy British rule and resort to force in the hope of intimidating the Government at home. The surrender was made, moreover, at the very moment when victory was in sight. As the Duke of Northumberland declared at Newcastle on October 29, 1921:

In spite of the Government's weakness, the magnificent spirit of the Forces of the Crown in Ireland gradually wore down the strength of Sinn Fein. By the middle of the summer the conspirators were in dire straits, many of their conscript followers were on strike and wanted to go home to save the harvest. Eighty per cent. of the civil population were sick of the terrorist tyranny, and had they been assured of protection, would have actively assisted the British troops. . . . A few weeks more of active operations would have broken the back of the rebellion, had the troops been given a free hand. This was the moment chosen by the Government to conclude the Truce and to invite the Sinn Fein leaders to a Conference. . . . Are you and I going to assume responsibility for a Settlement in which we do not believe, which means the abandonment of all our principles, a surrender to rebellion, the handing over of the Loyalists of Ireland to their fate and a Civil War in that country? No!

But the treaty with Sinn Fein was signed three months later, on January 15, 1922, with the very consequences the Duke had predicted. Although the Irish Free State had been established with Arthur Griffith as President of Dail Eireann, the campaign against England continued unabated, and on June 22 Sir Henry Wilson was murdered on his doorstep by the agents of the Irish Communist Brotherhood. At the same moment the Sinn Feiners and Republicans began to quarrel amongst themselves; on August 22 Michael Collins was killed in an ambush near Bandon: ten days earlier Arthur Griffith had died in hospital, not, it was whispered, from wholly natural causes. So were the words of St. Just exemplified: "He who stops half-way in revolution digs his own grave."

CHAPTER VIII

DISTURBING INDIAN CONTENTMENT

THE revolutionary movement in India has followed strangely the same lines as the revolution in Ireland. Between the two countries, so far apart geographically, certain striking similarities may be noticed. In both the population consists mainly of an unlettered peasantry, content to till the soil in peace and roused to discontent only by circumstances that interfere with this pursuit, such as drought or disease amongst their crops, but capable also of sporadic outbursts of violence as the result of religious fanaticism or of a sense of grievance exploited by cunning agitators. In both, this religious fanaticism has been kept alive by the existence of warring creeds: in Ireland, the antagonism between Protestants and Catholics, and in India—to take only the broadest division—the ancient feud between Hindus and Moslems. In both countries again, secret societies flourished under the cover of which the instigators of crime could escape detection, and the wretched tool be made to pay the penalty for the deed assigned to him.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century disturbances in India were mainly confined to clashes between Moslems and Hindus; occasionally, however, the desire to shake off the yoke of the British Raj, which had found expression in the Mutiny, flamed out again in isolated deeds of violence, such as the murder of Mr. Rand in Poona in 1897, the Muzzaffarpur murders of 1908, and the agitation carried on by Tilak and Paranjpe during this period.

The most violent revolutionaries were as a rule those Indians who had received some education in the West of Europe. Centres of propaganda existed both in London and Paris. In 1905, a native of Western India, Shyamiji Krishnavarma, started a "Home Rule Society" in London, and in the following year he instituted "India House," which became a hot-bed

of sedition, a product of which was the young Indian, Dhingra, who assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie at the Imperial Institute on July 1, 1909. The enthusiasm this dastardly deed excited in the mind of the late Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt has already been referred to earlier in this book.

Unfortunately Mr. Blunt was not alone in his encouragement of sedition. A number of English men and women lent it their support. Many no doubt were sincere, believing they were helping the cause of "freedom"; what they lacked was a knowledge of real conditions in India. Some, perhaps, had listened to the strange expositions of Mrs. Annie Besant and really believed her assurances that the indigenous civilisation of India was built on "the law of Brotherhood." Even the caste system, according to Mrs. Besant, was originally founded on this law.

Caste was devised for service; it has become the expression of social tyranny, instead of social service. Hence it is doomed to disappear, but it has lasted for at least seven thousand years, and still lasts, and is strong in many parts of India to-day; a social institution that has lasted so long, and has kept a civilisation stable, prosperous and wealthy, is not a thing to be simply denounced, but to be understood, etc.¹

Apart from the glaring error in figures—for the caste system in India has lasted at most 3,500 years, or about one-half of the period assigned to it by Mrs. Besant—the whole of this description could only be taken seriously by an audience which preferred the "teaching" of Theosophy to the study of real historical facts. The pseudo-scientific doctrines of the Theosophists have, however, so far succeeded in penetrating public opinion to the detriment of Great Britain, that it is necessary here to pause and consider what British rule has really meant to India.

From the death of Aurungzebe in 1707 until 1803, when the British occupied Delhi under Lake, India was in a state of chaos. Not only were the Indian rulers—Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs, who nominally owed allegiance to the Emperor at Delhi—constantly at war with each other, but a further element of confusion was introduced by the Pindari system of organised violence and looting. This was put down by the British Government after several years and with considerable difficulty.

¹ Lecture on the War and its Lessons of Fraternity, given at the Queen's Hall, October 12, 1919.

The abolition of *Thuggi* was a further step towards law and order. The Thugs (or Tugs) or, as they called themselves, the *Ramasi*, were gangs of bandits who preyed on travellers, chiefly in Central India. Their emissaries went into villages, and on the pretext of protecting travelling merchants, decoyed them away and robbed and murdered them. The British established a wonderful organisation for obtaining evidence on these outrages, and eventually succeeded in breaking up the gangs of Thugs.

A more difficult question to deal with was the standing feud between the Moslems and Hindus. Before the British occupation of India, rioting seldom took place, for the simple reason that wherever Moslems ruled they kept the Hindus in complete subjection, and vice versa. The British instituted equality between the two religions, with the result that from that time onwards riots have periodically occurred. This is particularly the case when in the autumn the Mahommedan feast of the Mohurram clashes with the Hindu feast of the Dusséra, and the procession of Moslems, mourning for the deaths of Hassan and Hussein, comes into conflict with the Hindus, rejoicing over the opening of the season of warlike activities.

The rôle of the British is then to prevent the rival bands of devotees from cutting each other's throats, and this has been accomplished with the least possible interference in the exercise of religious liberty.

Amongst abuses dealt with by the British were *suttee*, the burning of widows, which was abolished in 1830, and female infanticide, which until 1874 was universal, the method being to stifle female infants at birth by preventing them from drawing the first breath. The procedure of the British Government was to keep a register of births in all the villages, and if in any case the ratio of girls to boys was lower than the standard fixed by the Government, to quarter police in the village and keep them there until the ratio was corrected.

As to the material benefits reaped by India from British administration, such as posts, telegraphs, railways and other means of locomotion, it would be impossible in a short space to convey any idea of the extent to which these have transformed the life of the people. Irrigation has made famine impossible over large areas and has brought other large areas, notably in the desert south of the Punjab, into cultivation. Famine is further averted by the introduction of railways and by famine works which include a system

for throwing grain into necessitous areas by means of concentration camps.

To turn to the question of disease. Before the British came to India the people were in the hands of their native doctors, known as hakims or vaidas, who were approximately on a level with European medical practitioners of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The British set up the Indian Medical Service, which has saved an enormous number of lives by vaccination and the prevention of plague and cholera. Hospitals have been established everywhere. Women doctors are sent into the zenanas to treat patients whom the laws of purdah prevent from being attended by male practitioners.

On the question of the way Indian women are cared for in sickness by native methods Miss Mayo's book, *Mother India*, may be consulted with advantage. Everyone familiar with Indian life knows that these revelations, though naturally distasteful to Hindu sentiment, provide a very fair statement of the case. The terrible condition of women, not in sickness alone, under certain phases of Indian life, is still pitiable. Thus, although suttee in the sense of the burning of widows has been abolished by the British Government, the cruel treatment meted out to them still continues. These unfortunate victims of fate, frequently children of a few years old whose so-called "marriage" has in reality been nothing more than an affiancement to future husbands they have never seen, are turned into household drudges and live a life of misery until they die. I have stood myself in the courtyard of a Hindu temple, with little veiled widows sitting around me on the ground, amidst the remains of mangled goats whose blood flowed around my feet, whilst the monstrous tusked head of Shiva, the god of destruction, grinned down upon the hideous scene.

The British have been unable hitherto to do anything with regard to this frightful system except by influence and the force of public opinion which Miss Mayo's courageous book has done much to stimulate.

The same may be said with regard to the question of the Untouchables, those sixty millions of human beings condemned to ostracism by the caste system with which the British Government has judged it advisable not to interfere, but here again attempts are now being made to rouse public opinion on the subject.

British rule and British influence in India have thus largely consisted in efforts to protect the native population from each

other,—Hindus from Moslems and Moslems from Hindus, children from their parents, and *zemindars*, or farmers, from the rapacity of the *bannias*, or money-lenders, who exploited their labours.

A Russian writer thus described the effects of British rule in India :

In reality the English have been the saviours of India. During whole centuries the history of India presents one continual spectacle of murder and devastation. The bloody era closes with the occupation of the country by the British, whose rule has been incomparably more mild, humane and just than any government under which the Indians have ever lived.¹

Of all this the advocates of "self-government" or "Home Rule" for India give no idea.

To talk of "self-government" by a country of the vast area of India, with a population of 320,000,000 at varying stages of civilisation, composed of innumerable different races professing seven principal creeds besides a number more unclassified and speaking 222 languages, is absurd. Where amidst all this medley of conflicting elements is the "self" to be found? The result of such an attempt can only be chaos.

The truth is that, on the part of the great mass of the population, there was no spontaneous desire in the past to throw off British rule. The whole movement has been artificially engineered. The husband of the present writer, who served twenty years in India, keeping on excellent terms with Indians of all classes, never throughout this period heard a single Indian express a desire for self-government or any hostility to British rule. Indeed, the one appeal continually addressed to him was: "Sahib, see that my case is judged by a Sahib and not by an Indian magistrate."

Of course in India, as everywhere in this imperfect world, there were grievances. Moreover, a sense of grievance is latent in nearly every human heart, and if you seek for discontent you will find it. Monsieur Louis Madelin in referring to the *cahiers de doléances*, in which the people of France were invited to state their grievances on the eve of the French Revolution, well observed: "Every man is discontented under whatever régime he lives; if at a given moment, a government, however excellent it may be, calls upon millions of men to complain, they will complain very loudly."²

¹ Michael Katkoff in the *Moscow Gazette*, quoted by H. G. Keene, *Hindustan under Free Lances*, p. 184.

² *La Révolution Française*, p. 38.

That a just ruler should listen sympathetically to legitimate grievances spontaneously put forward and do his utmost to redress them is, of course, obvious, but to dredge, so to speak, in the subconsciousness of human minds, whether individually or in the mass, in order to discover whether certain disturbing emotions may or may not be present is frequently to bring them into being. This form of mass psycho-analysis has always been a favourite pastime of Liberal politicians, and found its supreme expression in Mr. Montagu's famous declaration on the necessity for deliberately disturbing the placid contentment of the Indian people. The proportion of the Indian people consciously desiring self-government constituted only an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, but from the time of Lord Ripon's scheme of "Local Self-Government" and its sequel in the proposed Ilbert Bill of 1883 for increasing the power of Indian judges and magistrates, defeated by the protests of Europeans in Calcutta, the course of British administration in India has been marked by concessions to this vocal minority, composed almost entirely of Indians educated in England. These men, drawn mainly from the *babu* class, after absorbing Western ideas on political and social questions, could find no scope for their activities on their return to their native land and consequently joined the ranks of agitators, if only as a means of advancement. Such was the encouragement given to the promoters of sedition that an Indian official once observed to a British officer: "If you want to get on, you must become an agitator, and then the Government will take notice of you and you may become a judge." Thus in India as in Ireland, the same fatal policy of concession, of yielding, not to reasonable demands but to seditious agitation, helped to swell the army of malcontents.

In the old days this was less serious than at the present time, since the influence of no foreign power was then discernible behind the Indian revolutionary movement. It is true that Russia was habitually regarded as a danger to British rule in India, but no evidence was ever forthcoming that her policy included the encouragement of sedition. Such espionage as she exercised was directed towards the acquisition of military information and not towards revolutionary propaganda. It was left to Imperial Germany to inaugurate the latter method of undermining British rule in India, which is now being followed out with still greater energy by the Bolsheviks of Russia. It is from the date that the latter

danger arose that laxity towards sedition has acquired a greater importance.

The German conspiracy began several years before the Great War; Bernhardi in his book, *Germany and the Next War*, published in 1911, had expressed the hope of shaking British power in India. Already at that date the Germans were working in touch with Indian revolutionaries in Europe, and the *Ghadr* Revolutionary Party had been formed by a certain Hardayal in California, spreading the doctrine that Germany would strike at England. This man was again a product of Western education. As the *Morning Post* observed: "The worst of the Indian extremists come from the English-educated stratum. The two most conspicuous outrage plotters, Hardayal and Krishnavarma, both took English University honours."¹ The bomb thrown at Lord Hardinge in Delhi in December 1912 was the outcome of this teaching.

These were the tools that Germany found ready to hand on the outbreak of war.

In the spring of 1914 Hardayal, having been arrested in the United States and released on bail, absconded to Switzerland where a group of Indian revolutionaries forgathered, which included Champakaraman Pillai, described in the preceding chapter as the secretary of the V.V.V. in 1917. This young man, a Tamil, was at the beginning of the War President of the "International Pro-India Committee" at Zurich, and in October 1914 he left Switzerland to work under the German Foreign Office in Berlin. He established there the "Indian National Party" attached to the German General Staff.

Hardayal also went to Berlin, where, with a certain Chattopadhyaya and others, he helped to direct an Indian revolutionary society. In August 1916, a conspiracy was discovered by the British Intelligence Service for assassinating the leading men in the Allied countries—including the King of Italy, Lord Grey, Lord Kitchener, Monsieur Poincaré, etc.—by means of bombs manufactured in Italy and tested by the German military authorities at the military testing-ground near Berlin.² Chattopadhyaya was found to be the leading spirit of this plot.

Amongst other members of the "Indian National Party" in Berlin was a certain Heramba Lal Gupta, who became Indian agent of Germany in America and worked with two

¹ *Morning Post*, September 28, 1921.

² *Queer People*, by Sir Basil Thomson, p. 99.

German Americans, Boehm and Wehde, in training Indians for an invasion of Burma. All three men were tried and convicted at a State trial in Chicago in November 1917. The particular mission of Wehde was to convey 20,000 dollars of German money to the revolutionaries in India.

This Indian revolutionary society in Berlin appears to have been later in close touch, if not identical, with the V.V.V. According to the official report of its activities, it aimed at establishing a republic in India, held constant meetings attended by Turks, Egyptians, German officials and, most noteworthy of all, German professors and ex-missionaries who, in their time, had received the hospitality of the British Government in India. Hardayal and Chattopadhyaya were in daily communication with the German Foreign Office. To carry out the revolution in India, there was an Oriental Bureau for translating and disseminating seditious literature to the Indian prisoners of war in Germany. Inflammatory letters, drafted by the German Government and addressed to Indian Princes as from the German authorities, were translated and printed. A consignment of these was intercepted by British agents in Persia on its way from Bagdad to India in 1916. They had the autograph signature of the German Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg. "Meetings were held in Berlin in which the common objects of India and Germany were dilated upon, these meetings being sometimes presided over by highly placed German officials."¹

It will, then, be seen that not only the same organisation, the V.V.V., which had developed from the German Irish Society, but actually the same people were behind the revolutionary movement in India and Ireland. Captain Boehm, who was arrested in British waters and interned early in 1917, was shown to have been employed by Germany in connection with Indian as well as Irish sedition, whilst von Skal and von Igel, who were on the staff of Count Bernstorff in Washington and who, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, employed John Devoy as the link between Germany and Sinn Fein, were also in touch with Indian revolutionaries.

Thus, when the Bolsheviks came into power their path had been already paved for them in the East by German agents, many of whom now passed into the service of Moscow to carry on the same anti-British propaganda, this time in the cause of world revolution. During the years that followed on the ending of the War, the German and the Bolshevik conspiracies

¹ *Rowlatt Report on Revolutionary Conspiracies in India*, p. 67. [Cd. 9190.]

remained so intimately related as to be almost indistinguishable. Though differing in their ultimate aim, the two were united in a common cause: the destruction of the British Empire. Thus, as we have seen, the V.V.V., or the League of Oppressed Peoples, had been the instrument by which Germany, deprived of her own colonies, sought to create disaffection amongst the native populations in the colonies of the Allies; but after passing under the control of Soviet Russia, the League, whilst still admirably suiting Germany's purpose, became a purely Communist organisation directed against European rule over so-called "subject races," whether this was exercised by the Allies or, as in the case of the Dutch East Indies, by powers which had remained neutral throughout the War.

In India the soil was already well prepared, and in July 1920 schools of Communist propaganda were established in Delhi and Benares. At the secret Bolshevik Conference which took place at Bremen at the end of January 1921, Commissar Eliawa, of the Department for Eastern Propaganda, was able to boast of the successes achieved by the school for training propagandists at Samarkand, which during the last nine months of 1920 had turned out 3,500 trained instructors, including 930 Hindus. Although a Communist Party was not formed officially in India until some years later, Indian delegates were present at the second World Congress of the third International in Moscow in 1920. These were Ashtaria, Sheffik and the notorious Roy, the details of whose career will be given in a later chapter.

In India as in Ireland, however, the actual doctrines of Communism were able to make little headway at this date, and the method of exploiting national sentiment was adopted as the surest way of bringing about revolution. This policy was laid down by Lenin in his instructions to his agents in India. Roy, at the aforesaid Congress of the third International in 1920, had stated that the Nationalist movement in India was mainly supported by the middle classes, and therefore the Bolsheviks in India should not associate themselves with these bourgeois Nationalists. Lenin, replying to this, urged the Indian Communists, as a matter of tactics, to support bourgeois Nationalism without losing their identity. This policy was supported by the British delegate, Tom Quelch, who observed that Communists ought to support every movement against Imperialism and that "the British Government would find it very easy to crush a purely Communist move-

ment in the Colonies, but a Nationalist Movement would be a much more difficult proposition." Quelch also proposed the formation of an Oriental Bureau of the Communist International to study these questions in detail. As we have seen, an Oriental Bureau for anti-British propaganda amongst Indians had already been established in Berlin under the auspices of the German General Staff, and a new Bureau controlled by Roy was now established in that city, working in touch with the Komintern, which after a time absorbed the earlier one.

Such were the forces by which Britain was confronted in India at the end of the War. If ever there was a moment when a firm hand was needed at the helm it was during those years of 1917 to 1922, when first Imperial Germany and then Bolshevik Russia were attempting by every method to stir up agitation against the British Raj. Yet this was the moment chosen by Mr. Montagu to embark on his plan for stirring the Indian people out of their placid contentment with British rule.

The incident must be viewed in its context for its full enormity to be appreciated. The Russian Revolution had taken place in the spring of that year (1917), Lenin had arrived in the sealed train from Switzerland, and in July the Bolsheviks had attempted to seize the reins of power. In June the Leeds Conference had taken place and Committees of Soldiers' and Workers' Councils had been formed in England. The War was at its height and the Sinn Feiners were working in close touch with Germany. In India, Mrs. Besant had been conducting a violent campaign in favour of Home Rule which led to her internment in June as a dangerous agitator. And it was now, when Britain was threatened on all sides, that Mr. Edwin Samuel Montagu, who on the resignation of Mr. Austen Chamberlain in July was appointed Secretary of State for India in spite of a formal protest by the overwhelming majority of the Unionist Party, elected on August 20, 1917, to deliver his famous pronouncement in the House of Commons which shook the power of Britain in India to its foundations :

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India [i.e. Mr. Montagu's ally, Lord Chelmsford] are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the

British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, etc.

Why "responsible"? Had the Government of India then proved irresponsible hitherto? Yet in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, published later, the highest tribute is paid to British rule in India, which was described as

a system which has won the admiration of critical observers from many lands, and to which other nations that found themselves called upon to undertake a similar task of restoring order and good government in disturbed countries have always turned for inspiration and guidance. England may be proud of her record in India.

This was the system it was proposed to change when Britain was engaged in the greatest war in history and needed every ounce of her energy and the support of every portion of her Empire to ensure victory. If ever there was a case for not changing horses in the middle of a stream it is to be found here.

Mr. Montagu's next step was to set Mrs. Besant free to carry on her campaign of agitation. Although she was not imprisoned, but merely interned in a pleasant hill station together with her fellow-workers Arundale and Wadia, on the orders of Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, with the approval of the Government of India, and of the former Secretary of State (Mr. Chamberlain), although her paper, *The New India*, had been condemned as dangerous and seditious by a High Court of three judges—two of them Indians—Mr. Montagu in response to a telegram from Mrs. Besant now asked the Government of India "whether they would consider the question of releasing the agitators," in order "to secure a tranquil atmosphere." The Government did as it was requested, the agitators were released and the Home Rule League, further emboldened by this measure, set on foot a further and still more violent campaign.

In November 1917 Mr. Montagu arrived in India, where Mr. Lionel Curtis was already busy organising his "Round Table Groups" and working out his scheme for a Diarchy in India which found favour with Mr. Montagu.

Sedition had now reached such a pitch that, in December, the Government of India decided to appoint a Committee "to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India." This was carried out under the President-

The "politically-minded" fraction of the Indian people whom they hoped to placate might, as they said, not exceed 5 per cent., but that 5 per cent. was vocal whilst the contented 95 per cent. were inarticulate. More than this, the 5 per cent. was violent, threw brickbats, burnt, destroyed and murdered, whilst from the 95 per cent. there was nothing to fear.

This policy of sacrificing the law-abiding to the seditious failed, as it must always fail, in times of revolution. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, far from placating the Extremists, opened the door to fresh agitation. In the National Congress Mrs. Besant moved a resolution in favour of immediate self-government which was passed unanimously. What else could be expected? Had not Mr. Montagu himself declared that "steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible"? The Home Rule League was merely translating his words into actions.

Meanwhile the Rowlatt Report had made its appearance in India, and the Government now proposed to legislate on the lines it suggested with regard to revolutionary agitation. This naturally provoked a crisis. To publish two reports in the same month (July 1917), one urging the necessity of rousing the native population from their placid contentment, the other proclaiming the need for suppressing sedition, was like applying the accelerator and the brake at the same moment to a motor-car in motion. The result was of course chaotic. As soon as the Rowlatt Bill—entitled the "Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act"—had been placed before the Legislative Assembly (February 1919) the now notorious Gandhi issued his Manifesto against it.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, born in 1869, was an old agitator who had received the usual education in London, where he was called to the Bar, after which he returned to India and practised as a lawyer in Bombay. In 1893 he went to Natal, where he was imprisoned several times for instigating civil disobedience amongst the Indians who had migrated there. During both the South African War and the Great War Gandhi, however, showed himself in a very different rôle, working in ambulance corps with courage and devotion; in the Great War he even conducted a recruiting campaign in the Kaira district of Bombay, which, however, was only a gesture, wholly barren of results. The signing of the Armistice sent him back to his old career, and the Rowlatt Bill offered him a pretext for starting a campaign of agitation against the British Raj, under the name of *Satyagraha*,

or passive resistance. In this he was joined by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, a disciple of Mrs. Besant and a sister of Chattopadhyaya, who, as we have seen, had worked with the Germans during the War. It is of interest that in January 1919, on the eve of Gandhi's agitation, information was received by the British authorities in India that large sums had been remitted by the Soviet through Finland to their agents in India.

At the same time Afghanistan, as the shortest road to India, offered an admirable vantage-point for anti-British propaganda. The way had been paved by a German military mission which visited Kabul in 1916 and enlisted the sympathies of the Afghan Nationalists led by Amanullah, third son of the Ameer Habibullah. The Ameer, who was loyal to Great Britain, was murdered in February 1919, and his son Amanullah, who did not share his father's sentiments, ascended the throne in his place.

Amanullah's first act was to proclaim the independence of Afghanistan, and then to embark on the invasion of India, which began in April of this same year, in concert with the agitation carried out by Gandhi. At the same time Amanullah turned for support to Soviet Russia, which proclaimed itself as "Afghanistan's only friend." In reply to a flattering letter from the new Ameer, Lenin replied :

Having received the first missive in the name of the free independent Afghan nation with greetings to the Russian people, let us hasten in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, and of all the Russian people, to convey an answering greeting to the Independent Afghan people, heroically defending their liberty against foreign slave-drivers.

In a further letter on November 27, 1919, Lenin observed :

The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between two great peoples opens out wide possibilities for mutual help against every attempt on the part of foreign beasts of prey against the liberty of others.

On February 28, 1921, the Soviet-Afghan Treaty was signed in Moscow, and a yearly subsidy in cash was henceforth paid to Amanullah by Moscow up to 1926, when it was continued in the form of armaments, although a pact between Great Britain and Afghanistan had been negotiated in November 1921.

Amanullah, who described Gandhi as his "very, very great friend," was a valuable ally for the Bolsheviks during the

troubles in India in 1919. Never, indeed, since the Mutiny had the country been in such a state of ferment. In the spring of 1919, simultaneously with the disorders in Egypt and following the same lines, a rising took place all over Northern and Western India, which culminated in the famous affair of the Jallianwallah Bagh on April 13.

From the 10th to the 13th of April Amritsar had been in a state of anarchy. On the 10th the mob had risen, burned banks and Government buildings, and after the first few minutes had murdered all Europeans on whom they could lay their hands with the exception of Miss Sherwood, a lady doctor greatly respected for her years of work in the city, whom they brutally assaulted and left for dead in the street.¹ Mr. Montagu himself, in his official dispatch, stated: "In Amritsar itself, violence, murder and arson of the most savage description had occurred three days previously, and the city was still practically in possession of the mob." Such was the state of affairs when Brigadier-General Dyer, in command of the Jallunder Brigade, arrived to take control of the situation on the evening of April 11. In the words of the Adjutant-General to the Legislative Council:.

On the 11th and 12th, he [Brigadier-General Dyer] reorganised his troops and on the 12th he marched a column round and through the city in order that a display of force might have its effect on the minds of the populace. We have it on record that many spat on the ground as the troops passed. From the shouts of the mob it was clear that they were in an entirely unrepentant spirit. No military force was used on this occasion as the officer in command decided to issue proclamations as to his future intentions before employing such force. From a military point of view he would have been quite justified, I hold, in using force on that day, but the General Officer Commanding decided to pursue his policy of patience and conciliation. A proclamation was issued on the evening of the 12th, and on the morning of the 13th April, the Officer Commanding marched with a body of troops through all the main streets of the city and announced by beat of drum his intentions of using force should occasion arise. The people were permitted to collect in order to hear the proclamations.²

In defiance of this, a huge mob of 15,000 to 20,000 people, armed with *lathis*—formidable weapons made of solid bamboo

¹ *Report of the Committee appointed by the Government of India to investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab (i.e. Hunter Report), 1920, cmd. 681, p. 66, and Report East India: Punjab Disturbances, April 1919, cmd. 534, p. 4.*

² Speech of General Sir Havelock Hudson, Adjutant-General, on September 19, 1919. See *Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council*, vol. lvi, p. 376.

shod with iron—collected in a piece of waste ground, known as the Jallianwallah Bagh, which was frequently used for meetings, in the afternoon of April 13. The meeting on this occasion was organised by Dr. Muhammad Bashir, who had throughout been conspicuous for his inflammatory language and was sentenced to death as a member of a criminal conspiracy. It was addressed by two other members of the same conspiracy and by an agitator who had been sentenced to transportation for life under the Defence of India Act.¹ To say, as was afterwards alleged, that the meeting was a fortuitous one was therefore untrue. General Dyer, who had received notice that this assembly was to take place, contrary to the terms of the proclamation issued by him that morning, accordingly proceeded to the Jallianwallah Bagh at the head of a force consisting only of 50 Sepoys armed with rifles and 40 Gurkhas armed with kukris (knives). As they entered the Bagh an agitator was in the midst of haranguing the crowd. The speech was one in praise of murder and the speaker had been a member of the sanguinary mob on the 10th. General Dyer thereupon opened fire and the crowd immediately began to disperse, but two groups appeared to be collecting as if to rush the troops, who then directed their fire on these points, with the result that the whole space was speedily cleared.

This was the action for which General Dyer was censured a year later, mainly on two charges—for firing without warning and for continuing to fire longer than was said to have been necessary. But three warnings had been given that unlawful assemblies would be fired on, and General Dyer contended that he only continued to fire until the crowd dispersed. Yet even supposing it could have been proved that, confronted with a terrible and perplexing situation and obliged to come to an instant decision, General Dyer had erred on the side of over-severity, the fact remains that his action had the effect of breaking the spirit of rebellion in Amritsar and of restoring order, not only throughout the district, but all over India. After the news of his crushing the rebellion at its source had gone round—a matter of a few days—not another shot had to be fired. If lives were lost in the Jallianwallah Bagh, countless lives were saved that must have been sacrificed if the riots had continued. Once again it was seen that at

¹ *Reports of the Punjab Disturbances*, April 1919 (Report submitted by the Punjab Government to the Government of India on October 11, 1919), cmd. 534, p. 6.

times of crisis resolute action leads to less bloodshed in the long run than excess of leniency.

A parallel might be found in that classical example of the suppression of mob violence, the so-called "Massacre of the Champ de Mars" on July 17, 1791, when Lafayette's troops, weary of being assailed with brickbats by a crowd that had already murdered two harmless individuals, opened fire, killing a number of their assailants and scattering the rest. This method of showing the mob that—as Gouverneur Morris observed—"killing is a game that two can play at" not only cleared the Champ de Mars of rioters, but sent the revolutionary leaders flying in all directions and stopped the French Revolution for a year.

The "massacre" of the Jallianwallah Bagh had at first the same effect. On April 18—five days later—Gandhi rediscovered his lost loyalty to the British Raj and advised his followers "to give Government effective co-operation in restoring order." In a letter to the *Times of India* he expressed regret for having embarked on the mass movement of civil disobedience and said that he had "underrated the forces of evil."

The same day, April 18, Mrs. Besant also wrote to the Press, criticising Gandhi for his revolutionary activities. On her way down from Simla she had seen the account of the rioting at Delhi and Amritsar, and now wrote as follows :

I say that when a small handful of soldiers and police is face to face with a mob of many thousands, and the mob begins to pelt them with brickbats, it is more merciful to order the soldiers to fire a few volleys of buck shot than to allow the violence to gather strength until either the town must be given up to mob rule or machine-guns and bombs be brought into play. It is a terrible alternative, but any Government, worthy the name, has to face it.¹

Thus firm action at Delhi and Amritsar had won the respect of India's two leading agitators ; at the same time it rallied loyal Indians to the support of the British Raj. A fortnight after the affair of the Jallianwallah Bagh, the leading men of the district came forward and offered General Dyer 10,000 Sikhs to fight for the Government against the Afghan invasion, of which news had just reached them, and inviting him to command them. General Dyer and his Brigade Major also received the unusual honour of being made Sikhs and on

¹ *Times of India*, April 21, 1919.

several occasions General Dyer was acclaimed by Indian gatherings as the officer who had saved the situation.¹ In October of the same year he was promoted to permanent command of a Brigade and in January 1920 to temporary command of a Division.

But the effect of all this was counteracted by the action of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, who, after the good results of the display of force at Amritsar had become visible, returned to their policy of conciliation; a number of sentences passed on the rioters were reduced, one of the ringleaders was released unconditionally. Gandhi thereupon resumed his campaign, this time under the name of "Non Co-operation"; meanwhile Mrs. Besant had sailed for England in order avowedly to assist Mr. Montagu in his Reform Scheme, but also to get in touch with the more extreme members of the Labour Party and the trade union leaders, in order to carry on propaganda with regard to British misrule in India.

The final blow to the cause of law and order was delivered by the Hunter Committee, instituted by the Government to investigate the disturbances that had taken place in the Punjab, which in its Report, issued in March 1920, stated that it found "no evidence of an organised conspiracy" and ended by censuring General Dyer for his action in the Jallianwallah Bagh. General Dyer, who was given no trial and no opportunity to defend his conduct before a military tribunal, was thereupon deprived of his command and ordered to retire to England. The officials who had supported him met with the same condemnation. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was Governor of the Punjab at the time of the Amritsar riots, in a letter to the *Morning Post* of November 7, 1921, spoke of "the extreme severity [of the Government] to its own officers and misguided leniency to the Punjab rebels," with the result that the Indian Extremists have ever since "been clamouring for the disgrace and dismissal of these unfortunate officers whose only fault was that in novel and critical conditions they had done their duty according to their lights. . . . The Government had bowed to that clamour. These officers know they are marked men and that their careers in India are blocked or ruined. Some have already left the Service in disgust."

Fortunately in 1924 the full facts of the so-called "massacre" were brought to light in a British High Court of Justice. The main issue in the libel suit brought by Sir

¹ *Disturbances in the Punjab*: statement by Brigadier-General R. E. H. Dyer, C.B. 1920. Cmd. 771.

Michael O'Dwyer against Sir Sankaran Nair (a member of the Government of India at the same date) was whether General Dyer's action at Amritsar, of which Sir Michael O'Dwyer approved when informed of it, was an "atrocitiy" as alleged by the defendant. After a hearing of five weeks, in which over 100 witnesses, British and Indian, were examined on oath, the judge, Sir A. McCardie, gave his considered opinion, which the jury accepted by a majority of 11-1, that "General Dyer had in the exceptional circumstances acted rightly and had been wrongly condemned by the Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu)."

British justice prevailed and Sir Michael O'Dwyer won his case. So much for the "massacre."

The conduct of the Government with regard to the affair had far-reaching effects. Members of the Indian Civil Service refused to send their sons into it and felt it their duty to warn young men against going to India. As Lord Sydenham and Lord Amphilh pointed out in the House of Lords on October 25, 1921, "one main cause of our growing difficulties in India is that our officials there can no longer count on the loyal support of the Government which they serve." In consequence, the class of men who took up service in India deteriorated from that date, and part of the trouble taking place to-day in that country must be attributed to this fact. The Indian is very quick to recognise what he knows as a "Sahib"; unfortunately some of the officials now in India no longer answer to that description, and consequently fail to inspire respect.

Another effect of the Dyer affair was to discourage loyal Indians who, after supporting the British Raj, were left to the mercy of the Extremists. As an Indian observed to an acquaintance of the present writer at the time: "We have nothing to lose by being England's enemies and nothing to gain by being her friends."

By means of this policy the patient work of 150 years was undone in the space of two. As Sir Michael O'Dwyer wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* in September 1921: "Our military and political position in India and the frontier was never so strong as in the summer of 1919. They have never since the Mutiny been so weak as to-day." For this, accredited representatives of the British Raj were directly to blame.

From the time of General Dyer's disgrace onwards, a series of disturbances took place all over India—the renewed campaign of Gandhi—this time under the slogan of "Swaraj"

(Home Rule)—the boycotting of the Duke of Connaught's visit to India in February 1921, the *hartals* or strikes arranged by Gandhi and other insults levelled at the Prince of Wales on his arrival in December of the same year, the Moplah rising in the South-West—organised, as we have seen, by German agents—with the loss of at least 5,000 lives, and meanwhile the increasing audacity of the Bolsheviks which Sir Robert Horne's note to Krassin had done nothing to mitigate. Lord Reading, who replaced Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy in April, pursued the same policy of conciliation and accorded several interviews to Gandhi, who afterwards declared that the Viceroy had shown himself by no means hostile to the Non-Co-operation movement. In June Gandhi, encouraged by this reception, issued a Manifesto in which he said: "The Ali Brothers, like me, continue wilfully to break the law of sedition and therefore to court arrest." No action was taken, and Gandhi, who had now identified himself with the Khilafat movement, went forth on a tour with Mahommed Ali and published a further Manifesto, proclaiming that "Civil Disobedience is the sovereign remedy for all ills." This was the man whom Mr. Montagu had called his "friend"!

The volume of indignation that had been steadily rising in the ranks of the Conservatives ever since the Dyer Debate, and which had been stemmed by the Government's refusal to allow a day for the discussion of Indian affairs, at last found expression in the indictment of Mr. Montagu's policy by Sir William Joynson Hicks in the House of Commons on February 14, 1922.

A few weeks later (on March 9) Mr. Montagu's resignation was announced, and a sigh of relief went up from all lovers of the British Empire. The crisis had been brought about over a merely technical matter—the publication by Mr. Montagu of a Manifesto by the Government of India without reference to the Cabinet. This was too much even for Mr. Lloyd George, whose letter calling the Secretary of State to order left that Minister no option but to resign his post. He retaliated, however, a few days later by open sneers at Mr. Lloyd George in the course of an address to his constituents at the Cambridge Liberal Club:

The accusation of a breach of the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility from the Prime Minister of all men in the world is laughable. It is grotesque. . . . The head of our Government at the present moment is a Prime Minister of great if eccentric genius, whose contributions to the well-being of his country and of the world

have been so well advertised as to require no stress from me, whose achievements are so well known, but who has demanded the price which it is within the power of every genius to demand—and that price has been the total, complete, absolute disappearance of the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility ever since he formed his Government.

Mr. Montagu then went on to infer that Mr. Lloyd George had played into the hands of the "Die-Hards," and added :

I believe that this Die-Hard Party is the most dangerous element in the political life of this country.

Dangerous to what ? Certainly not to the security of the Empire, as events in India at this moment demonstrated. All that the Die-Hards asked was that Governors should govern, and this was what Sir Michael O'Dwyer had done, and also Sir George (now Lord) Lloyd, since his appointment as Governor of Bombay in December 1918. Gandhi, whose headquarters were at Ahmedabad, had come under his jurisdiction, and Sir George Lloyd now plainly declared that unless Gandhi was placed under restraint he would not be responsible for the maintenance of public tranquillity in the Presidency. On the day following the announcement of Mr. Montagu's resignation, March 10, 1922, the news of Gandhi's arrest reached England by telegram. This decisive action put an end to agitation, and for several years the Swarajist movement remained quiescent.

PART II

CHAPTER IX

THE DIE-HARD REVOLT

By the spring of 1922 a definite crisis had been reached with regard to the Coalition. Mr. Lloyd George's hold on the country was now steadily weakening. As "the man who won the War" he had emerged triumphantly from the "Khaki Election" of 1918 and for a time held his own, not only owing to the halo of victory with which the public had invested him, but also to his buoyant optimism. The nation after four years' stress and strain was like a patient recovering from a long illness, and Mr. Lloyd George as the family physician, heartily repeating the assurance "we are getting stronger and stronger every day, soon we shall be in better health than we have ever been before," provided just the stimulant it craved. It would have turned with aversion from a man who had told it the truth, namely, that having won the War was cause enough for thankfulness and that difficult times lay ahead in which every effort would be needed in order to bring the long and painful work of reconstruction to a successful conclusion. Instead of facing realities such as these, the country preferred to listen to the seer who could always discern the light breaking over the distant mountain tops and speak comfortably of the "good time coming."

But by 1922 the period of convalescence was past. The nation, at any rate in part, had regained its vitality and Mr. Lloyd George's bedside manner had begun to pall. Coué methods no longer deceived it. It knew that every day and in every way things were not getting better and better. The light breaking over the mountain tops had proved a false dawn; the promised good time had not materialised—on the contrary, the outlook was blacker than it had ever been before. At home the unemployment figures were mounting up towards 2,000,000. Bolshevist propaganda was making headway. The reign of terror in Ireland had not been arrested by the

treaty with the rebels in January of that year. Disorders in India had culminated in the indictment and subsequent resignation of Mr. Montagu. The Palestine Mandate of 1917, confirmed this July by the League of Nations, had led to the inevitable clash between the dispossessed Arabs and invading Jews in the Jaffa riots of May in the preceding year. The British Protectorate over Egypt was terminated by the Agreement of February 28, 1922, and that country given over, like India, to the agitators. The British Empire was being undermined at every point.

Meanwhile Soviet Russia, rent with internal dissensions and economically at the end of her tether, had found support in the Government of Great Britain. The tottering regime of Bolshevism was given a new lease of life this April by Mr. Lloyd George at Genoa, and Lenin gratefully acknowledged his help in bringing Germany and Russia together on this occasion.¹ As to the Rapallo Treaty signed by the Germans and the Bolsheviks behind the backs of the Allies, Mr. Lloyd George, on his return to England, referred to this only as "a great error in judgment" and proceeded to advocate "coming to some arrangement with Russia" in the interests of world peace.²

It was the sense of national humiliation provoked by all these events that led to the revolt by the group of Conservatives, resolved to break away from the Coalition, who came to be known as the "Die-Hards."

The pioneer of this movement was the Duke of Northumberland, who as early as October 1921, in the Newcastle speech³ quoted in a previous chapter, had sounded the call to revolt. He declared that the Government from fear—fear of the Labour Party, fear of the trade union leaders—had followed a policy of surrender to the forces of Revolution, which had culminated in the Miners' Strike, the attempt at a general strike by the Triple Alliance, the formation of Councils of Action, etc.

¹ In an interview at the time of Genoa, published in the *Serbska Retsh*, Lenin was reported as saying that the Genoa Conference gave the Soviet Government an excellent opportunity for forming an alliance with Germany.

"Mr. Lloyd George did us really a good turn and we must be most grateful to him; now Chicherin's way to success is open and in the near future we and the Germans are going to dictate to Europe, not only in Europe, but in Asia too. We cannot thank Lloyd George enough for his most valuable assistance. We will throw England down in Asia with the aid of Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey." Quoted in *Morning Post*, June 4, 1922.

² Speech in the House of Commons, May 25, 1922. *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cliv, cols. 1455, 1457.

³ Speech to the Council of the Northumberland and Newcastle Unionist Association, October 29, 1921.

And he ended an appeal to secede from the Coalition with the words :

I daresay I shall be told that the break-up of the Coalition will involve the return of the Labour Party to power. I do not believe it would mean anything of the kind. The country is longing for a Conservative Government, because it wants a strong Government. It wants straightness and firmness, a Government which will maintain law and order and punish sedition. But if our Party continues to commit suicide by being false to all its principles and by selling its birthright for a mess of pottage composed of sentimental Liberalism and Political Opportunism, the British people will then indeed turn from us in disgust to some other alternative.

These proposals, says *The Times* report, were coldly received ; speeches in opposition were delivered by Sir George Younger (the Chief Unionist Whip), Sir George Renwick and others. The Hon. F. W. Lambton alone supported the Duke. Yet the words listened to with incredulity to-day were to be proved triumphantly right on the morrow, and the Duke's prediction that Conservatism, freed from the shackles of the Coalition, would sweep the country, was fulfilled just a year later. How different might the fortunes of England have been if that courageous voice, now for ever stilled, had not only been listened to but followed to the end !

But the majority of the Conservatives feared to be the first to break rank. Their pusillanimity was seen on October 31, when a Vote of Censure on the Government's handling of the Irish question was moved by Colonel Gretton. Only 43 Conservatives had the courage to support the motion, which was opposed by 439 Members of all parties.

A favourite reason given by Conservatives at this juncture for maintaining the Coalition was the necessity for the Reform of the House of Lords as a bulwark against Bolshevism, and therefore the two Parties must remain united until the required legislation had been carried through. As this was never done, however, either by the Coalition or succeeding Conservative Governments, it is difficult to accept such an explanation as other than an excuse. The fact is that the Unionists, in spite of their overwhelming majority in the Coalition—359 to 126 Liberals—were afraid to stand on their own feet.

In the light of after-events—the ensuing victories of the Conservatives at the polls in November 1922 and October 1924, and the present complete divorce between Conservatism and Liberalism—it is curious to remember the timidity that

afflicted the leaders of the Conservative Party at this crisis, their shrinking dread of breaking away from the Coalition which seemed to them the only ark of safety from the rising tide of Socialism. Mr. Lloyd George, who was not in the least afraid of Socialism himself—had he not always held out a helping hand to it, whilst denouncing it, at every juncture?—cleverly imbued the Conservatives with this idea, so that even reputedly “strong men” in the Party renounced all thought of independence. Not only Mr. Austen Chamberlain, on February 21, 1922, emphasised the necessity for maintaining the Coalition as a defence against Socialism, but also Lord Birkenhead, at a dinner of the Junior Constitutional Club two days later, warned the Unionist Party that there was not the slightest chance in existing circumstances of an Independent Unionist Government obtaining an adequate working majority in the country. “It was said that the time had come to dissolve the Coalition, and that the Conservative Party should make an independent appeal to the electors.” He took the view that “this was a counsel of insanity,” and so far as he knew, “there was no responsible Unionist leader in the Government or out of it who took a different view.”¹

The present writer well remembers venturing to predict at that time that if the Conservatives went to the country they would sweep the board, only to be met, like the Duke of Northumberland, with indignant derision. The parrot phrase: “Who would you put in his place?” which had done duty in the case of Mr. Asquith up till December 1916, was again made use of to prove the absolute indispensability of Mr. Lloyd George until another “indispensable” was discovered in the person of Mr. Bonar Law, and later on in Mr. Baldwin. It is strange that experience has not yet proved the fallacy of believing that any man is irreplaceable.

The *Morning Post*, which dared to challenge the attitude of the Conservative leaders, met with violent hostility and abuse. One indignant Conservative, Sir William Raeburn, wrote to say that “the leading articles of Saturday and to-day are scandalous. . . . I consider it nothing less than criminal to write as you do.” At the recent Annual Conference of the Party he had found “the greatest loyalty to the Coalition and . . . great condemnation of the *Morning Post*’s vendetta against Coalition Unionists and particularly against the Prime Minister.”²

To this, Viscount Curzon in a letter to the *Morning Post*

¹ *The Times*, February 24, 1922.

² *Morning Post*, February 9, 1922.

replied that he also attended the Conference and did not find the unanimity of which Sir William Raeburn spoke. And he added: "It must also be remembered that the most tremendous efforts were put forward by the Party organisers to secure the attendance at the Conference of people who could be relied upon to support the Coalition under any circumstances whatever."¹

In other words, the Conference was rigged by supporters of Mr. Lloyd George in the Central Office of the Conservative Party.

But the Die-Hards continued their campaign; a number of meetings were arranged during the early spring of 1922, and on March 8 they came out with their Manifesto, which was published in *The Times* of that date. The principal points of policy may be summed up as follows:

1. Loyalty to the Throne and maintenance of religion.
Reform of the House of Lords.
2. Protection of life, liberty and property.
3. Crime—murder, arson, etc.—to be resisted by the whole force of the State.
4. Economy and relief from excessive taxation.
5. Freedom for private enterprise instead of State interference and the multiplication of officials supported out of public funds.
6. Sound finance and careful administration instead of hasty and grandiose schemes of so-called reconstruction.
7. Peace both at home and abroad as an indispensable condition of liberty and security necessary to active industry, regular employment and prosperity.
8. Firm and unselfish government throughout the Empire, notably in India. . . . Liberty, stability, peace and economy to be maintained in every part of national policy.

The Signatories to this Manifesto were: The Duke of Northumberland, Lords Salisbury, Carson, Finlay, Londonderry, Linlithgow, Sumner, Sydenham, Sir Frederick Banbury, Sir W. Joynson Hicks, Sir A. Sprot, Colonel John Gretton, Captain C. T. Foxcroft, Messrs. Rupert Gwynne, Esmond Harmsworth and Ronald McNeill.

It is difficult to understand why the term "Die-Hards"

¹ *Morning Post*, February 10, 1922.

should have been applied to the authors of a programme on which the only criticism one might make is that it was too vague in its terms—peace, economy, liberty, stability being presumably what every Party must at least profess to desire. Certainly nothing less “provocative” can be imagined. That a group of politicians expressing themselves with such extreme mildness should have been invested with a sobriquet implying aggressively combative qualities, is indicative of the inertia into which the rest of the Conservative Party had fallen. When on April 5—two days after Mr. Lloyd George had averted a Cabinet crisis by moving a vote of confidence in himself—Sir William Joynson Hicks in the House of Commons made a further appeal to the Party to break away from the Coalition, the resolution was again defeated, but this time by the narrower majority of 288 to 95.

It was then that the *Morning Post* came gallantly to the rescue with an attempt to rally the country around the Die-Hard Group. On June 13, 1922, the famous “Appeal to the National Honour” was published in its columns, embodying an indictment of Mr. Lloyd George’s Government in more forcible language than the “Die-Hards” themselves had employed :

The abject surrender to the organised assassination and the Bolshevik conspiracy in Ireland coincided with the toleration of sedition in India and the abandonment of Egypt, the central strategic station of the Empire, under the threats of inciters to mob violence. These betrayals of trust coincided also with the furtive negotiations of the Prime Minister with the abominable tyranny of the Russian Soviet, the implacable enemies of British rule in every part of the world. At the same time it has been the persistent policy of the Government ever since the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, while professing friendship with France, to work against France in the interests of Germany.

Together with this declaration, an appeal for subscriptions was issued by the *Morning Post*, which came to be known as the “Die-Hard Fund.”

This was just the lead for which the virile elements in the country had been waiting. The enthusiasm it evoked was tremendous and reached concert pitch when the murder of Sir Henry Wilson, on his doorstep in Eaton Place, was announced nine days later on June 22. By the first mail after the opening of the fund, money began to pour in, “mostly in small sums.” At this distance of time when the high hopes

raised by the Die-Hard Movement have faded amidst the general apathy that has overtaken the once great Tory Party, it is pathetic to read the letters that accompanied these humble donations. Obscure patriots all over the country—doctors, parsons, ex-service men, brave old maids with the blood of warrior ancestors in their veins, women who had lost their sons or husbands in the War—poured out their very souls on paper, and asked only to be allowed to perform some act of sacrifice for the great cause. A man, sending a few shillings, describes himself as "one who is poor and getting poorer every day but must do something to try to save the Old Country," another, enclosing a cheque, observes, "it is ten times more than I can afford, but the cause is worth the sacrifice." One, instead of purchasing a new bicycle, sends the whole sum; another the price of a pair of gloves. A woman writes: "I have given up my summer holiday tour to enable me to send the enclosed cheque (£10 10s.) as a contribution to the Die-Hard Fund." Many offered personal service to the Movement. Alas, that so much self-sacrifice, so much energy and patriotism could not have been made of more permanent service to the nation! The Die-Hard Movement undoubtedly led to the break-up of the Coalition, but after that object had been attained little more was heard of its activities. From the outset it had neither organ nor organisation which would have served to keep its supporters together and have made it a real force in the country. Only four months earlier a weekly journal, *The Patriot*, had been started with the fund collected by the Duke of Northumberland, and from that day to this it has waged incessant warfare on the forces of disruption, although constantly on the verge of extinction for lack of funds. In view of the fact that its principles were identical with those of the Die-Hards, it is difficult to understand why they did not make *The Patriot* their organ and ensure its continuance with the large sum of nearly £22,000 to which their fund eventually amounted. Further, if they had formed themselves into a body which all sympathisers might have joined, with headquarters that could have served as a rallying centre, they might have come to exercise as great an influence on the Conservative Party as the I.L.P. over the "Labour" Party, keeping it true to its principles and acting as a constant incentive to action.

Unfortunately the Die-Hard Group, whilst comprising some of the ablest men in the country, had neither the means, nor perhaps the time, at their disposal, to carry out a sustained

campaign. They could raise a cry, they could hoist a standard, but when people came flocking to it, they had no plan for directing their energies in a practical direction. Nor had they amongst them any popular figure capable of rallying the masses and of superseding Mr. Lloyd George in the imagination of the people.

It was not a mere matter of "wizardry": Mr. Lloyd George, it is true, had achieved his position as virtual dictator of the country by a form of hypnotism. It was frequently said that people who entered his presence, prepared to disagree with him to the uttermost, fell immediately beneath his spell and found themselves unable to resist him. To a lesser extent the same thing had been said of Mr. Asquith during the first year of the War. Indeed, this power of compelling agreement had come so generally to be recognised as a *sine qua non* of political leadership in the years following on the War, that whenever a statesman's qualifications for the Premiership came under discussion it was common for the objection to be raised: "Ah, but he has no magnetism," as if the lack of this attribute should immediately disqualify him for the post. History, however, tends to show that magnetism is by no means the secret of leadership. The part of a great leader is to make other men great, to draw out their latent qualities and allot them to posts in which these will be used to the best effect; it is not to keep them in subjection like a row of hypnotised fowls with their beaks fixed to a chalk line, unable to move in any direction. Napoleon was not only a great military leader himself, but he made out of obscure soldiers great generals whose names have gone down to history with his own.

In so far, then, as Mr. Lloyd George had maintained himself in power by wizardry, he had weakened his position by alienating men of independent spirit, so that when he fell his whole entourage fell with him. But let us be just: Mr. Lloyd George was not merely a wizard. He was "a character." All over the country people, to whom the other politicians were only shadowy figures, could visualise Mr. Lloyd George as the cartoonists and the photographers portrayed him, never at rest, but always up and doing—gesticulating, orating, filled with life and energy whether at work or play, whether holding crowds spell-bound, singing Welsh hymns at local festivals or dashing off amidst Oriental magnificence to some glorious treat on the Continent. A creature so alive could not fail to gain a hold on the popular imagination. In the Die-Hard

camp there was no one who could hope to rival him in energy or versatility. Yet it was to the Die-Hards that he owed his fall.

The Newport by-election on October 18, 1922, won by Mr. Reginald Clarry—an Independent Conservative, supported by the Die-Hard Group—with a majority of 2,090 over the Liberal who had held the seat since 1918 and who now figured at the bottom of the poll with the Labour candidate second, showed the strength that Conservatism had gained amongst the electorate.

The famous Carlton Club meeting, which took place next day, assembled under the cheering influence of this victory, and now Conservatives, other than Die-Hards, dared to come forward and assert their independence. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, who presided on this occasion, again put forward the necessity of a united front against the Socialist menace, but the contention was without effect. The Executive Committee of the National Unionist Association had already challenged the right of Mr. Chamberlain to settle the future of the Party in relation to the Coalition, and Mr. Stanley Baldwin, replying to his speech at the Carlton Club meeting, also censured his policy of going to the country at the impending election without consulting the Party. Leaving the question of the Socialist danger aside, Mr. Baldwin drew attention to the Lloyd Georgian danger. Mr. Lloyd George had been described by Lord Birkenhead as a dynamic force, but "a dynamic force is a very terrible thing; it may crush you, but it is not necessarily right."

Speeches in support of breaking away from the Coalition were made by Mr. Bonar Law, Sir Henry Craik, Colonel Leslie Wilson and others, whilst Lord Balfour supported the opposite policy. Finally the following resolution, proposed by Captain Pretyma, was put to the meeting and passed by 187 votes to 87:

That this meeting of Conservative members of the House of Commons declares its opinion that the Conservative Party, whilst willing to co-operate with Liberals, should fight the Election as an independent party with its own leader and with its own programme.

This result was immediately conveyed to Mr. Lloyd George, who thereupon resigned. Three days later Mr. Bonar Law, unanimously elected leader of the Unionist Party, became Prime Minister.

Thus fell the once powerful Coalition under circumstances

that might seem incomprehensible to any but the Anglo-Saxon mind. Here were no flights of rhetoric, no fiery denunciations such as accompany the overthrow of a statesman in foreign capitals. The Die-Hards played no part in the proceedings; they had merely created the atmosphere in which a more vigorous Conservatism could thrive. But it was vigour without violence. Such was the suavity of the speeches made on this occasion, so generous were the tributes paid to Mr. Lloyd George, even by those who sought to overthrow his domination, that the Dictator fell, as it were, beneath a hail of bouquets.

To Mr. Lloyd George, however, the nature of the missiles by which he was assailed mattered but little; enough for him that they had driven him from the seat of power. Far from accepting the decision of the Carlton Club with the Anglo-Saxon calm amidst which it was delivered, he reacted to it with all the impetuosity of his Celtic temperament. The next day he was off on a speaking tour to Leeds with a retinue of at least eighteen faithful supporters and a special train which stopped at different stations on the way, where Mr. Lloyd George received Liberal deputations and orated to them from his carriage door. On leaving St. Pancras he said dramatically to the assembled reporters: "I am a free man. The burden is off my shoulders. My sword is in my hand."

Why a man just relieved of a burden should seize a sword was not apparent. Rest, one might suppose, would provide a more welcome form of relaxation. But rest was the last thing Mr. Lloyd George desired. "He loves a fight," Mrs. Lloyd George explained to the reporters. "His spirit goes up and his health improves. A fight is like a tonic to him."

For a peace-loving nation a Prime Minister who could only be kept in health by combat was naturally disturbing, and a sigh of satisfaction at his resignation arose all over the country—not from the ranks of Conservatives alone. Lord Grey of Fallodon, opening the Independent Liberal Campaign at Bradford on October 24, declared:

"I feel a sense of relief, something that was not wholesome has gone out of the political atmosphere." [Cheers.] The real reason why the Coalition Government had come to an end, Lord Grey went on to say, was "not a difference of policies. They had so many policies. It is not difference of principles, because we were never able to discover a single principle. It has been simply distrust. [Hear, hear.] They have lost the confidence of every section in the country, and at last they

have lost the confidence of the majority of the Conservative Party. . . . What has happened is not political difference of opinion ; it has been that feeling that we could not trust the Lloyd George Coalition, a feeling which goes far deeper than mere difference of opinion could possibly go." [Hear, hear.]¹

Germany, however, mourned the departing statesman. "For the German nation," the *Tageblatt* observed, "Mr. Lloyd George's resignation is a deplorable happening, for it means that fresh decisions will be taken regarding Germany and those decisions are likely to be less favourable."

A French paper sent round his funeral notice with a deep mourning band in the name of the German people.

The General Election that took place on November 15, 1922, overwhelmingly confirmed the decision of the Carlton Club meeting and the Conservatives were triumphantly returned to power 344 strong, whilst the Asquithian Liberals numbered 60 and Mr. Lloyd George's Liberals had dwindled to only 57.

The Conservatives now had all the cards in their hands. For the first time since 1906 they were free to carry out the principles which in the past had contributed so greatly to the welfare of all classes and to the prosperity of the Empire. All the loyal elements in the country looked to them to act up to their convictions, to carry through legislation for the Reform of the House of Lords, to do justice to the Irish Loyalists, to put down sedition in India, to suppress Bolshevist propaganda at home and in the East, to free the working-men from the political tyranny of the trade unions, to stem the tide of Socialism at home, to strengthen the Entente with France and last, but not least, to bring in measures of fiscal reform that would relieve unemployment, largely produced by under-cutting through depreciated foreign currencies, particularly German.

It was a great programme, but the electorate that had placed the Conservatives in power trusted them to carry it out with courage and energy. Hope was in the air that autumn of 1922.

¹ *Morning Post*, October 25, 1922.

CHAPTER X

A CONSERVATIVE INTERLUDE

AFTER the great victory of November 1922 it might have been expected that with the marvellous opportunity for realising Conservative ideals now offered them the Party would at once have embarked on an energetic educative campaign amongst the electorate, not only with a view to preparing the way for Protectionist schemes, but also as a counterblast to the intensive propaganda of Socialism. The present writer remembers expressing to a leading member of the Party at this moment the hope that this would be done, and adding: "Now surely is the time to follow up our advantage and make our position secure," to which the reply was made that nothing of the kind was at present contemplated, as everyone was feeling tired and in need of relaxation after the strain of the election. This period of relaxation appears to have been prolonged until the necessity of preparing for the next General Election arose. The Conservative habit has always been to wait until the last moment to rouse the electorate to the issues at stake—a circumstance to which the indefatigable Labour Party largely owes its success.

Besides this, the Conservatives seemed to have now ceased to believe in the menace of Socialism. However much they might disagree with the leaders of the Labour Party—as they had disagreed with the Liberals in the past—they declined to regard them as presenting any danger to the country. Of course they talked Socialism, but they did not really mean it. When it came to the point, men like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Snowden, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Clynes would be the last to desire the destruction of a social system from which they had gained so much already and on which they depended for the position they now occupied. This has always been a favourite argument with Conservatives who forget that it is not the present social system but agitation against it which

has given these men place and power, and that once they had succeeded in overthrowing it there would be nothing to prevent them from continuing to enjoy all the amenities of life. On the contrary, in a Socialist State their power would be greater than ever, whilst with all the means of distribution in their hands they would be able, until supplies ran out altogether, to ensure that they themselves did not suffer want. This has been the constant rule of revolutions, where, whatever privations the people might be called upon to bear, the demagogues have always been well provided for. Saint-Just laid down the principle in 1794 when he drew up the decree: "The possessions of patriots [i.e. of the revolutionary leaders] shall be inviolable and sacred. The goods of persons recognised as enemies of the Revolution shall be confiscated for the benefit of the Republic."¹ By means of this simple arrangement Saint-Just could continue to sleep in his golden bed at the Tuileries and to dine with his fellow-patriots at the best restaurants in Paris whilst the people waited outside in queues for food. And in Soviet Russia the Bolshevist officials could regale themselves with vodka, for possessing a bottle of which a working-man would be promptly shot.²

It is true that these pleasures are apt to be short-lived, for another constant rule of revolutions is that the faction which makes the revolution never ends by retaining the reins of power; but the lessons of history are no deterrent to ambitious schemes, and each generation of agitators hopes to establish its ascendancy when the Great Day arrives.

The first step to this reorganisation of the social system is to get all wealth out of the hands of its present owners, and if, as Lenin had said, it could be accomplished without a violent revolution so much the better. Accordingly in 1923 the Labour Party embarked on the scheme of Socialism by legislation. Already in their election programme they had announced their intention of increasing the death duties, of immediately nationalising mines and railways and of introducing legislation on agriculture, by which landlords would be "required to sacrifice rents before farm-workers had to accept starvation wages." Which farm-workers were starving was not specified.

In March, however, the Labour Party went a step farther,

¹ Report of Saint-Just to the Convention. 8 ventôse, An II. (February 26, 1794.)

² Mrs. Philip Snowden, *Through Bolshevik Russia* (1920), pp. 26, 27.

and the text of Mr. Philip Snowden's Bill for nationalising the land was issued in the following terms :

To abolish private property in land, and to transfer all land in Great Britain, which is not already the property of the Crown or of any public authority, to a newly created Ministry of Lands.

At the same time a full-blooded Socialist programme was laid before the House of Commons. On March 20 Mr. Snowden moved this resolution :

That in view of the failure of the Capitalist system to adequately utilise and organise natural resources and productive power, or to provide the necessary standard of life for vast numbers of the population, and believing that the cause of this failure lies in the private ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, this House declares that legislative effort should be directed to the gradual supersession of the Capitalist system by an industrial and social order based on *the public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution.* (My italics.)

This was precisely the conclusion at which Robespierre arrived, when he decided that "in order to destroy the power of the owners of property, and to take the mass of citizens out of their dependence, there was no way but to place all property in the hands of the Government,"¹ and that afterwards became the formula of Marxism. And it was this State Socialism of Marx that the Anarchist Bakunin in 1869 declared to be "the vilest and the most formidable lie which our century has engendered—the official democratism and the red bureaucracy."

The Labour Party also on occasion officially repudiated Marx. In an article contributed to the *Evening Standard* on February 26, 1923, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, answering Mr. Harold Cox, who had pointed out that Bolshevism and the policy of the Labour Party both sprang from the same source—Marx—wrote : "Mr. Cox knows perfectly well that neither of the two Socialist bodies co-operating in the Labour Party—the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society—is Marxian," and he went on to assert that the Independent Labour Party had "always declined to associate itself with the Marxian view of the class war."

Yet it was the I.L.P., of which Mr. MacDonald was then

¹ Gracchus Babeuf, *Sur le Système de la Dépopulation*, 1795.

the Chairman, that, as has been said earlier in this book, had declared that there must be no "*rapprochement* between Labour and Capital" or "any method of compromise aimed at arriving at a more amicable relation between Labour and Capitalism short of the total abolition of the Capitalist system."

As to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald himself, his views on Marx were interestingly expressed in an article entitled "Daddy Marx" which he contributed to the *Young Socialist*, organ of the Socialist Sunday Schools, of May 1910. Karl Marx, Mr. MacDonald declared, "was the kindest of men . . . all the exiles tell about the complete happiness which made Marx's home in Dean Street, Soho, a perfect shrine. . . . In Highgate Cemetery you may see the grave of 'Daddy' Marx, the tender man who never saw a poverty-stricken child on the road without patting its head and ministering to its wants."

Where Mr. MacDonald found the evidence for these touching incidents is difficult to discover; certainly no sentiments of this kind are to be found in the voluminous correspondence which passed between Marx and Engels published recently in Germany. An old Socialist who had frequented Marx's circle in London related to the present writer that no more miserable women than Marx's daughters could be imagined, —two ended by committing suicide.

But Mr. MacDonald had more than this to tell his young readers. Marx, he went on to say, "wrote the greatest of all Socialist books, *Capital*; he also, together with Engels, wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, which is like the small grain of mustard seed from which has sprung the great growth of our modern Socialist movement." (My italics.)

That Mr. MacDonald had not repudiated these views since 1910, seems evident from the fact that this article was reprinted in the number of the *Young Socialist* for May 1928 "with the Author's permission." Five months earlier he had sent a letter of New Year congratulation to this bright little paper.

Why, then, Mr. MacDonald should have hastened so to disassociate Marx, not only from the Labour Party, but from the I.L.P., is difficult to discover. At any rate the ultimate goal of all three remains the same—the overthrow of the so-called "Capitalist system" and its replacement by State Socialism.

This was the system proposed by Mr. Snowden in the House of Commons on March 20, and again on July 16, 1923, and which was rightly characterised by Sir John Simon in his

speech on the latter date as the Marxian philosophy. As usual in debates on Socialism, its advocates confined themselves almost entirely to indictments of the existing order ; in the report of Mr. Snowden's first speech, occupying thirteen columns of Hansard, the first ten are solely devoted to this line of attack. There were the usual references to conditions of labour in the early nineteenth century, the usual attempts to enlist sympathy by describing the evil conditions of children in factories at that date—which incidentally Lord Shaftesbury and not the Socialists succeeded in abolishing—but hardly a word about what the Socialists proposed to do. The voice of a member calling out, "What is your remedy?" was drowned in angry protests and the interrupter was called to order by the Speaker. Mr. Snowden then resumed his historical reminiscences, of which the following passage, designed to demonstrate the evil that capitalism had brought upon the world, was perhaps the most remarkable :

By far the greatest time that man has been upon this globe he has lived not under a system of private enterprise, not under capitalism, but under a system of tribal communism, and it is well worth while to remember that most of the great inventions that have been the basis of our machinery and our modern discoveries were invented by men who lived together in tribes.

The House seems to have received this extraordinary statement without a smile. Even Rousseau in his appeals for a return to nature hardly went so far as to claim for primitive man the achievements of Galileo, of Gutenberg, of Newton or of Watt, none of whom are recorded in the pages of history as having belonged to tribes. Mr. Snowden then went on to explain what his plan was not—it was not Bolshevism, it was not dictatorship—but as to what it was he gave no hint beyond observing that Lord Melchett (then Sir Alfred Mond) would find a place in it :

I assure the right hon. Gentleman that when the Socialist State comes into being he need have no fear, because his great abilities, his wonderful mental capacities, and his great organising skill will find abundant scope for their activities in organising Socialist enterprises.

This was quite in accordance with the policy of Lenin when he indicated the necessity of retaining a thousand first-class specialists to direct industry, who must be paid 25,000 roubles each or even four times that sum. According to the *Morning*

Post, Mr. Snowden had stated that under Socialism Sir Alfred Mond would be paid £10,000 a year¹—a gigantic sum in a world where all but experts and high Government officials would be reduced to penury. Sir Alfred Mond, however, was apparently not attracted by these promises regarding his future career, and his reply to Mr. Snowden was generally acclaimed to be masterly in its facts and logic.

It was to be regretted, however, that the Conservatives played so small a part in the debate. As the Party which stood above all for the maintenance of the Constitution they might have been expected to distinguish themselves on this occasion. As it was, not a single Conservative leader contributed anything of importance to the discussion, and the Liberals were left to fight the battle of Individualism almost unsupported. Indeed, Colonel Stanley Jackson, chief of the Conservative Party organisation, recorded this fact as if it were almost a matter for congratulation some months later. Speaking at Leeds on January 4, 1924, Colonel Jackson said that "he remembered very well the debate on Socialism in the House of Commons last session. Everybody was well aware that the most effective speeches on the subject came from the Liberal benches and were made by Sir Alfred Mond and Sir John Simon."²

Excellent as were the arguments of the Liberal orators, the Socialists laid themselves open to attack on many points which opponents with a more intimate knowledge of the Socialist movement could have used with good effect. The fact that past experiments in Socialism had failed, not through outside competition but through internal disintegration, was not sufficiently emphasised. But the principal strategic error of the debate was the failure to force the Socialists into a statement of the methods by which they proposed to reorganise the social order. If instead of allowing them to waste the time of the House by denunciations of the Capitalist system and by vague declarations on the nobility of their aims, the anti-Socialists had demanded in a body to be told the practical details of their scheme and had refused to continue the debate until this had been done, the Socialists would have been forced to put their cards on the table. This is of course the one thing that Socialists have always avoided doing. The present writer has read countless Socialist books, pamphlets and speeches, setting forth the benefits that Socialism is to confer upon the human race, but has never been able to discover any

¹ *Morning Post*, April 3, 1923.

² *Ibid.*, January 5, 1924.

that stated how these benefits were to be achieved, above all where the supplies are to come from for maintaining the workers in ease and luxury when the last "capitalist" has been expropriated or driven from the country, the last industrial enterprise nationalised and the last possession in land or goods has been confiscated by the State.

Nearly 100 years ago Macaulay in a speech on the Chartist Petition drew a terrifying picture of the crisis so lightly referred to by Socialists as the breakdown of Capitalism; he described the great demolition that must take place if "absolute and irresistible power" is given to the workers; "capital placed at the feet of labour, knowledge borne down by ignorance . . . What could follow but one vast spoliation? One vast spoliation . . . We should see something more horrible than can be imagined, something like the siege of Jerusalem on a far larger scale . . . pestilence . . . famine . . . As to the noble institutions under which our country has made such progress in liberty, in wealth, in knowledge, in arts, do not deceive yourselves into the belief that we should ever see them again. We should never see them again. We should not deserve to see them. All those nations which envy our greatness would insult our downfall, which would be all our own work."¹

But on that July afternoon of 1923 there was no such stirring voice to awaken the nation to its danger. Conservative statesmen reposed peacefully on their benches whilst men of another Party pleaded the cause of their ancient institutions, letting the power they might have wielded slip from their hands.

This curious attitude of detachment towards the menace of Socialism was the more surprising since events taking place at this moment in Russia threw a fresh light on the horrors of the Soviet regime and at the same time on the evident sympathy entertained for it by the "Labour" Party. Religious persecution had, of course, been carried on in that country ever since the Bolsheviks seized power, and the worst atrocities had been committed in 1918, when many of the Russian clergy had been put to death with unspeakable barbarity. No protest had then been forthcoming from the Western Powers, but now in the spring of 1923 the trials of the Roman Catholic prelates, Archbishop Cieplak and Monsignor Butkiewicz, filled the world with horror. The two priests were accused of teaching religion in defiance of the Soviet Government's laws, and

¹ Speech in the House of Commons on May 3, 1842. See *Macaulay's Speeches* in Everyman's Library.

summoned before a tribunal presided over by the Jewish prosecutor Krylenko, who has recently come into prominence again at the trial of the Russian journalists in Moscow (December 1930). A terrible picture of the condemnation of the Catholic priests in 1923 was provided by the Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Mail* :

A Moscow audience, largely composed of Hebrew Communists, savage as the Jews who howled for Christ's blood in Pilate's courtyard. . . . Krylenko is as bloodthirsty as a wild beast. His ferocious bellowsings surpassed in horror anything I have ever heard. But infinitely worse were the jeers, sarcastic laughs and gloatings with which he assailed the men before sentences were passed.¹

Monsignor Butkiewicz was shot in a cellar of the Cheka a few days later ; Archbishop Cieplak was condemned to ten years' solitary confinement.

The news of these barbarities alarmed the Labour Party for the reputation of their *protégés* the Bolsheviks. Six months earlier Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had written :

I have been an unswerving hopeful regarding the Moscow Government. . . . We can now take the Moscow Soviet Communist Revolutionary Government under our wing and clothe it in the furs of apology to shield it from the blasts of criticism.²

But neither the thickest furs nor the Left Wing of the Labour Party could shield the Bolsheviks from the indignation these latest revelations aroused. Commander Kenworthy, who, though not yet a member of that Party, was known to share their sympathy for the Soviet system, hastily wired to Moscow that "the contemplated executions would have a deplorable effect upon public opinion in England." Mr. Lansbury sent a message to his friend Chicherin, begging for the reprieve of the condemned on the ground that "great Russia will show mankind a splendid example of toleration and mercy."!!! M. Herriot also interceded in the name of the Radical Socialists of France.

The Bolsheviks' comment on these protests appeared in the *Pravda* of March 30 :

Senile but honest Lansbury and Ben Turner, two of the leaders of the British Labour Party, are very perturbed by the decision of

¹ *Daily Mail*, April 5, 1923.

² *Forward*, October 14, 1922.

the Moscow Court. . . . As the majority of these so-called Labour leaders are swindlers, their "religious piety" is merely hypocrisy. Old Lansbury wants to transform the Church and religion into an instrument for the liberation of the working-classes, while old Ben Turner sends us a telegram in which he says: "A human life is valuable. Don't hang the Archbishop!" . . . In the future, whether in the matter of shooting the Patriarch Tikhon or a Protestant pastor or a Jewish Rabbi, the Soviet Government will not hesitate a second in putting them to death if this is necessary for the revolution and the friends of Soviet Russia, and the French and British Parliaments may save themselves the trouble and expense of sending telegrams to Moscow begging for clemency.¹

Meanwhile the official organ of the Labour Party made as usual no secret of its sympathy for the Soviet Government, and in a leading article entitled "The Commonsense of it," calmly asked: "Why should there be such an outcry over the execution of this Russian Roman Catholic priest?"²

The *Daily Herald*, however, showed itself capable of being roused to violent indignation at certain forms of inhumanity. In another paragraph at this date it referred to an incident that had occurred elsewhere and observed that "the world cannot be fit to live in until we have driven this devil of callous cruelty out of it." What was the cruelty in question? The fact that in one of the towns in the Ruhr German citizens on passing a French military picket had to lift their hats or were liable to have them knocked off.

The same attitude of indifference towards Soviet persecutions was displayed by the British Labour Party delegates to the Conference at Hamburg in May of that year, when the Second International with which their Party was affiliated joined up with the Two and Half International (or Socialist Workers' Union), founded in Vienna in 1921, with which the I.L.P. was affiliated. From 1923 onwards the Second International was known as the Labour Socialist International, or sometimes as the Hamburg International, and had for its President the German Socialist Otto Wels, with Friedrich Adler, the murderer of Count Sturgh, and Mr. Tom Shaw as secretaries.

On the occasion of the Conference in Hamburg that effected this union, thirty British delegates were present; these included Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. J. H. Thomas, Mr. Sidney Webb (now Lord Passfield), Mr. Charles Roden Buxton, Mr. Wallhead, Miss Susan Lawrence and Mr. H. N. Brailsford.

¹ Quoted in *Morning Post*, April 10, 1923. ² *Daily Herald*, April 4, 1923.

A resolution was drawn up at this Conference, demanding from the Soviet Government :

The immediate ending of the shameful persecution of the Socialists, workmen, and peasants holding other views in Russia and in Georgian territory at present occupied by Russian troops.

The immediate liberation of all persons condemned, arrested or banished for propagating their political convictions.

The abolition of the system of terroristic dictature of the party and a change to a regime of political freedom and democratic self-government of the people.

The resolution concluded with the words :

This congress expresses its warmest sympathy with all Socialist victims of the Bolshevik terror in Russia and Georgia, and declares it the duty of all Socialist and Labour Parties to give every possible moral and material help to all Russian Socialists acting in the spirit of this resolution.

The resolution was carried by 196 votes to 2, but *the whole British delegation abstained from voting.*¹

This attitude was in conformity with the Labour Party's habitual policy with regard to Russia. Whenever it has suited them to disassociate themselves from Bolshevism in order to win the confidence of the electorate and to disarm criticism on the part of their political opponents, they have never hesitated to express virtuous, though at the same time qualified, disapproval of the Bolshevik regime. But when it has come to taking action, even to the point of supporting a resolution, they have preferred the policy of masterly inactivity. In this way they have proved far better friends to the Bolsheviks than the latter's Communist allies, who by their extravagance have alienated public opinion. The Labour Party's occasional criticisms of the Bolshevik regime—always accompanied by the reflection that its errors must be attributed to the crimes of Tsarism—have had the effect of inspiring confidence in their assurances that the Bolsheviks, though mistaken in their methods, are animated by a noble ideal. Indeed, the British Socialist Press never ceases to assure its readers that its difference with the Bolsheviks is one of method only; the ultimate goal is the same.

It might have been expected that these events would at last have opened the eyes of the Conservatives both to the Socialist and the Bolshevik danger, and that now they were in control

¹ Press of May 29, 1923.

of the Foreign Office they would have taken a strong line with regard to Soviet activities against the British Empire. But little difference was discernible in the policy of Lord Curzon now that he was acting on behalf of a Tory Government instead of the Coalition. From March 30, 1923, onwards, the Foreign Office had been engaged in a lengthy correspondence with the Bolsheviks, beginning with a remonstrance at the condemnation of Monsignor Butkiewicz.¹ To this, Gregory Weinstein, in the name of the Moscow Foreign Office, returned an insolent reply saying that the Soviet Government had the right to pass what sentences it chose, and accusing the British Government of "the assassination in cold blood of political prisoners in Ireland." The British Foreign Office then dispatched a memorandum formally accusing the Soviet Government of violation of the Trade Agreement by continued anti-British propaganda in Persia, Afghanistan and on the Indian border. A report from Shumiatsky, the Soviet representative at Teheran, was quoted, in which it was stated that "a good group of workers has been organised who can act in an anti-British direction with real activity," and the sum necessary for carrying out this plan was given. In Kabul, Raskolnikov, the Soviet representative, had distinguished himself by exceptional zeal. His expenditure for anti-British activities in Afghanistan were given in detail. In a recent communication to Karakhan, the Assistant Commissary for Foreign Affairs, Raskolnikov had stated: "I consider it most important to maintain personal touch with and render at least the minimum amount of assistance to Indian revolutionaries. At the very lowest it is necessary to assign at least 25,000 roubles." Already in November 1922 seven Indians, who had been trained as Communist agitators at Tashkent, were arrested on their arrival in India from Moscow, whence they had travelled under the charge of Russian civil and military officials. Although the Soviet Government in their Note of September 27, 1921, had indignantly repudiated any connection between themselves and the Third International, at the Fourth Congress of that body held in Moscow on November 25, 1922, Sokolnikov, People's Commissary for Finance,² was one of three persons by whom the sums of £80,000 and £120,000 were allotted to the British and Indian Communist Parties respectively. Of this

¹ White Paper. Russia, No. 2 (1923). Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government respecting the Relations between the Two Governments. Cmd. 1869.

² Yakov Antonovitch Sokolnikov, real name Brilliant, appointed Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain in December 1929.

sum, £75,000 had arrived in England by the beginning of January 1923. The British Memorandum then went on to deal with the outrages on certain British subjects in Russia (Mr. Davison and Mrs. Stan Harding), with the treatment of British trawlers and the question of religious persecution. It ended with a remonstrance at the offensive tone of Weinstein's Note and the observation that "it seems difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that the Soviet Government are either convinced that His Majesty's Government will accept any insult sooner than break with Soviet Russia, or that they desire themselves to bring the relations created by the Trade Agreement to an end."

The Bolsheviks replied with their customary flat denials and counter-charges.¹ The accusations against the Soviet Government were based on "apocryphal documents" drawn from a "muddy source," the quotations referring to Persia were "pure inventions" and bore "no relation to any official documents in the knowledge of the Russian Government." As to their relations with "the peoples of the Orient," these were purely philanthropic—"the Soviet Government seeks an establishment of friendly relations with the peoples of the East, not by intrigues and gold, but by measures of real unselfishness and friendly feelings to them." The statement regarding funds assigned by Sokolnikov to the Communist Parties in question was equally without foundation. With regard to Soviet persecution of religion, "the Russian Government considered it necessary in the most categorical manner to deny the baseless charge that it was persecuting any religion of any sort." Soviet justice only fell on such of the clergy who were engaged in political activity against the safety of the State. At the same time the Soviet Government was willing to admit the "unusual tone" of Weinstein's Note on this question, and in a further communication² agreed to "take back" both his letters, but no apology was offered. Finally, on June 4, the Soviet agreed to come to an arrangement with regard to British trawlers and compensation to British victims of "repressive measures," and once again gave the undertaking to refrain from anti-British propaganda in return for an undertaking on the part of the British Government not to assist any hostile designs against the Soviet Govern-

¹ White Paper. Russia, No. 3 (1923). Reply of Soviet Government to His Majesty's Government respecting the Relations between the Two Governments. Cmd. 1874.

² Ibid., No. 4 (1923). Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, etc. Cmd. 1890.

ment.¹ The question of removing Raskolnikov and Shumiatsky from their posts, as requested by the British Government, was dealt with in the vaguest language which the British Foreign Office chose to interpret as agreement. This closed the correspondence and, as the *Annual Register* for 1923 observes: "Anglo-Russian relations were left on a firmer basis than before."

In July Rakovsky arrived in London to take the place of Krassin as Soviet representative. It may be of interest here to follow the past career of this personage.

Kristo Stancioff Rakovsky was born in 1873 at Kotel in Bulgaria. According to one account his parents were Bulgarian, though Turkish subjects, according to another his father was a gipsy and his mother Turkish, whilst yet a third described him as a Roumanian Jew, his family having settled in the Dobrudja eight years after his birth. His education had been begun at Gabrovo in Bulgaria, afterwards he attended several universities, including Geneva, where he became associated with the famous Revolutionary Socialist Vera Sassulitch, and in 1900 he went to Russia and engaged in Marxist propaganda.

On the outbreak of war, Rakovsky became a German agent under the direction of Parvus, alias Helphand, who employed him to carry on pro-German agitation in Roumania and Italy, and financed his defeatist paper published in Roumanian, *Lupta* (The Struggle). In this work he was associated with the Swiss professor Robert Grimm and the Russian Jewess Angelica Balabanova. Rakovsky was finally arrested in Roumania as a German spy and kept under restraint until 1917, when he was delivered by Russian deserters and then returned to Russia. In the following year, as President of the Ukraine Soviet Republic, he carried out a reign of terror at Odessa directed particularly against pro-Ally Roumanians under which a series of murders and appalling atrocities took place. In 1919 he founded a school for Communist propaganda at Kharkoff, where he worked in touch with the French Communist, Jacques Sadoul, representative of the Third International for propaganda in the Balkans. Rakovsky himself was a member of the Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

Such was the man who, under a Conservative Government, was allowed to come to London as representative of Russia. Whether his *dossier*, which must have been in the possession

¹ White Paper. Cmd. 1890.

of the Foreign Office, was ever brought to the notice of Lord Curzon must remain a mystery; at any rate in the light which this and the foregoing correspondence provide, the further exploits of the Soviet Delegation to this country, which culminated in the affair of the Arcos Raid in 1927, appear in no way surprising.

Lord Curzon afterwards spoke of Soviet activities as having been "in full blast" when he left the Foreign Office on the accession of the Labour Government in 1924. Why, then, did he admit Rakovsky to the country? Why did he not tear up the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement which, on his own showing, had been so flagrantly violated? Why did the Conservative Government not now break up the Soviet organisation in Moorgate Street, as they found themselves obliged to do four years later?

The *Morning Post* once observed, before the fall of the Coalition Government, when commenting on the Labour Party's strange subservience to the Soviet Government, that the Bolsheviks appeared to have some mysterious power, "a sort of dreadful fascination, like the snake over the bird," and it went on to ask: "Is the Prime Minister [Mr. Lloyd George] also under this dreadful fascination?"¹

Yet it appeared that Conservative statesmen likewise were not proof against the spell of the monster, and when it came to taking resolute action against it were paralysed, petrified into immobility, "as before the Gorgon's head."

¹ *Morning Post*, March 23, 1922.

CHAPTER XI

IMPERILLING THE ENTENTE

It is now time to turn to the question of the Entente with France, which Mr. Lloyd George had done so much to weaken and which the electorate that had placed the Conservative Government in power hoped to see restored to its former vigour. The great problem of the moment was that of German reparations, and we must take up the thread of narrative relating to the discussions that took place at the point where it was dropped in Chapter II after the Genoa Conference of April 1922.

The next incident was the undertaking embodied in what is known as the "Balfour Note," issued on August 1, 1922, by which Great Britain agreed to accept no more in respect of reparations from Germany and war debts than the amount of her debt to the United States, namely, £850,000,000, although the sum owing to her amounted to £3,400,000,000.¹

On August 7 a Conference of Allied Prime Ministers took place in London to discuss Germany's request for a moratorium for 1922. This was refused, but it was decided that Germany should be allowed to issue Treasury Bonds of six months' currency for the balance of payment due, which amounted to much the same.

At this moment Mr. Lloyd George fell from power. But although her principal advocate had now been replaced by Mr. Bonar Law as Prime Minister, Germany, emboldened by the concessions recently made to her, and counting on the influence at work behind the scenes to support her cause, proceeded on November 13, 1922, to deliver a Note to the Reparations Commission, in which she calmly requested to be relieved for three or four years from all payments in kind or cash, and proposed a conference of international financiers to consider granting her a bank credit. Affixed to the Note was a report drawn up by a number of international financial

"experts," expressing approval. Amongst these was Mr. J. M. Keynes, whose book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, had been described by Lord Balfour in the House of Commons as "an apology for Germany."¹

The General Election which took place later, after which the Conservative Government came into office, delayed negotiations for a few weeks, but filled the French meanwhile with hope that the question of reparations would now be firmly dealt with. Hitherto, the *Temps* observed, the Germans had known that England would prevent France being paid by Germany. Confidence was expressed in Paris that the advent to power of the Conservative Government under Mr. Bonar Law, whose courtesy and friendliness were applauded on all sides, would inaugurate a better order of things.

Unfortunately these hopes were not realised. Further conferences in London on December 9 and in Paris on January 11 led to no conclusions, and although the Reparations Commission in Paris declared Germany to be in default with regard to deliveries of timber to France, Great Britain proceeded to advocate a four years' moratorium. To this France replied that she was prepared to consent to a two years' moratorium if Britain agreed to cancel France's debt to her.

This was surely logical. How could France be expected to pay her debt to Britain if she was not to be paid by Germany? The outcry against French rapacity which arose in certain quarters at this crisis was based on an imperfect grasp of the situation. Ever since the War the British Government under Mr. Lloyd George had failed to overcome Germany's resistance to the payment of her just dues or to procure any guarantee of security to France. And now that Mr. Lloyd George was gone, the same policy was apparently to be continued. France therefore decided to take the law into her own hands and, in company with the Belgians, to carry out the plan agreed to by the Allies at the London Conference of April 30, 1921.

Accordingly on January 11, 1923, the French and Belgian troops entered the valley of the Ruhr.

A storm of controversy has raged around the legality of this step; wild stories were current at the time with regard to French plans of aggression and French "Imperialism." Yet so impartial a critic as Mr. R. B. Mowat wrote on this question: "France in occupying the Ruhr was acting within her rights according to the literal interpretation of the Treaty

¹ Hansard, vol. cxxv, col. 298. Date of February 12, 1920.

of Versailles," and further: "The occupation of the Ruhr and the steady wearing down of the German passive resistance produced the 'will to pay' without which the Dawes Scheme would have been so much waste paper."¹

But for the sympathy shown to Germany by her friends abroad, particularly in this country, the Ruhr episode would undoubtedly have been crowned with greater success. It was the knowledge that she could find support in these circles which encouraged Germany to embark on her policy of passive resistance, which prolonged operations and led to so much misery for her own people. Moscow also proclaimed its solidarity with "the workers of the Ruhr" and, whilst appealing to Great Britain through the Quakers for £75,000 in order to relieve the famine in Russia, was sending thousands of tons of wheat to the Ruhr so as to fortify resistance to the French.²

The British Labour Party in combination with the T.U.C. was, of course, particularly vociferous in demanding the withdrawal of the French troops, and hastened to pass a resolution expressing sympathy with the population of the Ruhr. Meanwhile Mr. Lloyd George surpassed himself in venom towards the nation for which he had once professed friendship. In an article on the Ruhr question which he contributed to the Hearst Press he wrote:

France has once more jumped on the prostrate form of Germany and the sabots have come down with a thud that will sicken the heart of multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic, whose friendship with France stood the losses and griefs of a four years' war. There is no doubt some joy for the unsportsmanlike mind in kicking a helpless giant who once maltreated you, and who, but for the assistance of powerful neighbours, would have done so a second time.

This, after Mr. Lloyd George himself had agreed with Monsieur Briand less than two years earlier that the Ruhr must be occupied if Germany did not comply with the conditions imposed by the Allies! Germany had evaded all her obligations, and now, just after this article appeared, the Reparations Commission declared her to be in general default.

The *Evening Standard*, answering Mr. Lloyd George's tirade, observed:

The dishonesty of Germany, the wriggings and evasions of the last four years, the insolence of her present bearing, her undisguised

¹ *European Diplomacy*, 1914-25, pp. 244, 245.

² *Morning Post*, March 14, 1923.

satisfaction at the rift in the Entente make any appeal to the feelings on her behalf ridiculous. She is not a "blind giant" kicked while helpless, but a very cunning and far-seeing swindler, with, unfortunately, too many cards up her sleeve.¹

At the very moment that Germany was pleading inability to pay, her industries were booming, new factories were springing up not only in the Ruhr, but all over the country, her new merchant fleet had been constructed since the War and miles of railway had been added by Krupps to their works. Taxation stood at £1 a head, instead of £20 as in England. It is true that the "intellectuals" and professional classes had been reduced to poverty—sacrificed to the interests of the big industrialists—but the manual workers were well paid, their wages rising in proportion with the fall of the mark. This inflation of currency had been deliberately brought about by the business men and financiers, who at the same time deposited huge sums of gold abroad.

Under these circumstances the British policy of reasoning with Germany was futile, and that portion of the British public which had not been misled by pro-German propaganda was whole-heartedly with France in her effort to make Germany pay. Sir Allan Smith, M.P., Chairman of the Managing Committee of the Engineering Employers' Federation, wrote at this juncture:

One thing arises from the present hotch-potch of the world's international affairs—that Germany, who has not "played the game" since the Armistice, has been brought face to face with realities by the bold French action in the Ruhr. . . . France alone among the nations has realised that the present state of affairs cannot continue. It is for this reason that her policy in the Ruhr should help in finding a way out of the present tangle of international finance.²

This is no doubt what would have happened if France had not been hampered in her action by the British Government, which, under pressure from the Labour Party and the International financiers, weakened still further in its attitude to Germany. In vain France pleaded that Britain should at least lend her moral support (Note of June 11, 1923); the British Government returned an evasive answer. Debates in the Lords and the Commons led to no conclusions; Colonel Gretton, however, on July 30, dared to warn the House that

¹ Date of January 22, 1923.

² *Evening News*, February 7, 1923.

the Government was drifting into a breach with France, and to urge whole-hearted co-operation with the French.

The climax was reached with Lord Curzon's "unfortunate" Note to France on August 11, in which the legality of the French advance into the Ruhr was questioned and the opinion was expressed that Germany's power to pay was thereby likely to be rapidly diminished. The overbearing tone of the missive, the tactless reference to the "ease" with which France had paid the indemnity imposed on her by the Prussians in 1871—a task accomplished only through heroic sacrifices on the part of the French people—the statement made that the policy of occupying the Ruhr was "doomed to failure" and the excuses made for German evasions naturally created widespread indignation in France and elation in Germany.

The result was the complete collapse of the mark.

But the French were equal to the occasion. Monsieur Poincaré kept his temper admirably and in a firm but courteously worded reply once more explained the French position and reiterated the impossibility of France paying her debt to Great Britain if she was not to receive the payment due to her from Germany. The unyielding tone of this letter had the effect of breaking down passive resistance in the Ruhr, to the advantage not only of the French, but of the population in that region.

The sincere desire of the French to forget past injuries and renew friendly relations with Great Britain was shown on the occasion of Mr. Baldwin's visit to Paris in the autumn of 1923. Mr. Baldwin, who had succeeded Mr. Bonar Law as Prime Minister on the latter's resignation, owing to illness, on May 20 of that year, was believed to be a true friend of France and received a popular ovation on his arrival in Paris on September 19. The conversation that took place between Mr. Baldwin and Monsieur Poincaré was reported to have been of the most cordial nature.

Unfortunately at this crisis Lord Curzon saw fit to throw his weight again into the scale on the side of Germany. To quote the *Annual Register*, which cannot be suspected of undue bias, in its account of the Imperial Conference which took place in October:

Lord Curzon criticised France with a sharpness hardly in keeping with the "atmosphere of confidence" which was supposed to have been generated in the interview between Mr. Baldwin and Monsieur Poincaré, and though he still protested against any accusation of

pro-Germanism he persisted in representing the occupation of the Ruhr as a policy leading to disaster and ruin.

General Smuts went farther and asked for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, which he himself had signed. To quote the *Annual Register* again :

He then called attention pointedly to the menace of French militarism and deprecated a policy of excessive generosity on the part of England or America which would have the effect of enabling France still more effectively to foster and subsidise militarism on the Continent. He admitted that *France had been left in the lurch by Great Britain and America through not obtaining the Treaty of Guarantee which had been promised her* [my italics], and had naturally adopted a policy of force as an alternative. But France knew from her own history and traditions that there was a nobler way, and he appealed to France in the day of her victory and greatness not to forget her noble historic mission as the great bearer of the liberal tradition in Europe.¹

But France, essentially practical in her outlook, is not given to striking attitudes in order to display her virtues before the world, and she saw no reason why she should be asked to sacrifice her hope of reparations and security from aggression on the altar of " Liberal tradition."

The appeal of General Smuts was typical of the unreality that pervades all these post-War Conferences where facts are perpetually subordinated to theories and actions replaced by " gestures." This is particularly the case with the British representatives, whose tendency to believe that what they want to happen is an accomplished fact, places them at a disadvantage between the opposing Realist camps of French and Germans. Just now they wanted to believe that Germany had renounced all ideas of aggression, and General Bingham, British representative on the Allied Military Control Commission in Germany, was alleged in the *Matin* to have declared that Germany had been completely disarmed. Yet the last Note of the Allied Ambassadors' Conference stated quite plainly that the military clauses of the Treaty had not been fulfilled.

France knew this quite well, she knew that Germany was still neither physically nor morally disarmed, and it was largely to check the illegal activities of her militarist organisations that France decided to occupy the Ruhr.

These associations, described in the second chapter of this

¹ *Annual Register* for 1923, pp. 106-11.

book, had grown in strength; stores of arms had been discovered, concealed in secret depots at various points in Germany, and it was believed in responsible quarters at this moment that no fewer than 500,000 men, outside the Reichswehr, were undergoing short-service training year by year.

During the occupation of the Ruhr the Black Reichswehr also became particularly active and the terrible "Vehm murders" took place which formed the subject of a trial at Landsberg three years later. It was then revealed that in obedience to the orders of a secret tribunal, organised on the lines of the mediæval Vehmgerichts, people were assassinated in diabolical ways and their bodies concealed. The shocking brutalities exercised against some of these victims were described in detail during the proceedings.

"The most interesting feature of this trial," *The Times* observed, "is the effort of the defence to show that the illegal organisations were controlled by the regular Reichswehr—in fact that their members were really soldiers, so that the Reichswehr authorities were partly responsible for the brutal manner in which traitors were disposed of."¹

How in the face of such revelations as these, published daily in the British Press, the theory of a completely peaceful and disarmed Germany could be maintained is impossible to understand. But the effect of these soothing assurances, accompanied by denunciations of "*French* militarism," was to give fresh encouragement to the militarist elements in Germany, and another "Putsch" took place on November 9, 1923, led this time by Adolf Hitler.

Hitler, the son of a Customs officer in Braunau, Austria, had earned his living in Vienna either as a dustman or a house painter—possibly as both. On this point his biographers differ. He also became a Socialist. On the outbreak of war, however, he entered the German army, thereby losing his Austrian nationality. It is said that at the end of the War he was still a Social Democrat and took part in the revolution; then suddenly he became a violent Nationalist and threw himself into the Pan-German cause, identifying himself particularly with the anti-Semite section of the movement known as the "National Socialists"—Socialists only in name.

This was the man who together with General Ludendorff proclaimed the revolution in November 1923. At the head of an armed band of "National Socialists" he thrust himself into a meeting of the "Leagues of the Fatherland" in Munich,

¹ Date of April 18, 1928,

and declared: "The national revolution has broken out to-day, the Government of the Reich is deposed and will be replaced by a National Government under Hitler. Ludendorff will march on Berlin with the new army of the Reich."

The revolutionaries were scattered, however, next day by shots from the Munich police and the revolution ended ingloriously. Hitler himself was arrested, condemned to five years' imprisonment, but released a few months later, when he set about reorganising his group.

Such were the events taking place in Germany when the French were reproached for undue apprehension as to German intentions and for occupying the Ruhr, largely as a measure of defence. That the Entente, which, as Mr. Austen Chamberlain said at this crisis, was "hanging by a thread," still remained unbroken was owing to the force of British public opinion, mainly on the side of France, and to the daily exposure of the true facts of the case by the *Morning Post* and also by the Rothermere Press. Yet not only Liberal and Socialist, but Conservative politicians continued to hold forth on the errors of French policy, its effect in checking industry in the Ruhr district, and the importance to our country of having "an efficient German people capable of producing goods in abundance by which alone they would be able to pay large reparations."¹ What was the electorate to make of this when four months later it was asked to vote for Protection against foreign goods?

That the occupation of the Ruhr served the interests of British workers was admitted by Mr. Walton Newbold, then Communist member for Motherwell, in a speech to the Executive of the Third International in Moscow at this moment.

The Communist Party [said Comrade Newbold] was unable to rouse the British workers on the question of the Ruhr because the stoppage of steel, iron and coal exports terminated the competition of Germany, France and Belgium, increased the European demand for British coal and thus reduced British unemployment in the coalfields and in the metal industry.²

And indeed, in a review of the depressed state of industry at the end of this year, the *Annual Register* observes that "the activity in the British coal-mining industry was due to some extent to the stoppage of supplies from the Ruhr coalfield."

¹ I quote from the speech of a Conservative candidate to a meeting at which I was present.

² Quoted in *Morning Post*, July 27, 1923.

Conservative politicians by attacking French policy in the Ruhr were thus playing directly into the hands of the Socialists and Communists whose sympathies were all with Germany.

The *Daily Herald* had always advocated the policy it described as "scrapping the whole bad business of making Germany pay," and, with the honourable exception of the Social Democratic Federation, dominated by Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the whole Socialist movement in Great Britain was in favour of letting Germany off altogether and leaving France to repair the ravages of war as best she could. The same attitude was adopted by the pro-German "Second Internationale"¹ at the before-mentioned Hamburg Conference in May 1923, where all the speeches on the opening day were devoted to explaining that "poor Germany could not pay and that the wicked French ought to leave the Ruhr."² The British delegation urged amidst German cheers that Britain should forgo all war debts. If then the Conservatives themselves turned towards Germany and away from France, the Socialists and Pacifists and conscientious objectors could proclaim triumphantly that they had been right all along, and that Britain had been wrong to go into the War on the side of France.

Meanwhile the patriotic elements in the country who retained the war-time outlook could feel nothing but disappointed at the policy of the Government from which they had expected so much. An uneasy feeling that anti-French influences were at work in the councils of the Conservative Party had prevailed throughout the past year in circles where the cause for which England and France fought side by side in the Great War had not become a dead letter. On April 12, 1923, Mr. Leo Maxse, editor of the *National Review*, delivered a lecture at the Æolian Hall on "Our Pro-German Politicians" before a crowded and enthusiastic audience. Lord Amphil, who took the chair, observed amidst loud applause that "no one could be pro-German without being anti-French and no one could be anti-French without being anti-English."

Mr. Maxse then described the course of Anglo-French policy since the War, showing the fallacy of pretending that the nation shared the pro-German tendencies of its politicians. On the contrary, it was "the widespread popular dislike of the anti-

¹ See series of articles by the late Mr. Adolphe Smith, member of the S.D.F., entitled "The Pan-German Internationale"—*The Times*, July 29, 30 and 31, 1919.

² See excellent article on this Conference, "If Labour Rules," by Mr. Lovat Fraser in the *Sunday Pictorial*, June 10, 1923.

French and pro-German attitude" of Mr. Lloyd George and his Cabinet that had been one of the main causes of the ignominious collapse of the Coalition. Unhappily there was a strong family likeness between the machinations of our Parliamentarians although bearing different and distinctive labels, "so that if one read the public utterances on international affairs of the present Prime Minister [Mr. Bonar Law] or either of our ex-Prime Ministers or the official leader of the Opposition, they would hardly know whether it was Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George or some Labour leader who was speaking." And Mr. Maxse ended by asking what was the "intangible, invisible influence in the background bringing pressure to bear on British statesmen, which must ultimately involve them in political catastrophe."

The applause which punctuated these remarks showed the extent of popular feeling on the subject.

By the autumn of 1923 a general disillusionment set in. What had the Conservatives done to justify the hopes placed on them at the time of their accession to power? They had reduced the income-tax by 6*d.*; the problems of rent-control and housing had been dealt with satisfactorily for the time being, but of the Die-Hard programme practically nothing had been carried out. Although in giving effect to the Irish Treaty and the Free State Constitution on December 5, 1922, the Government could legitimately argue that it was now impossible to go back on the pact arranged by the Coalition, there seemed to be no reason why justice should not have been done to the Irish Loyalists, whose claims by the end of the year 1923 still remained unsettled. The *Evening News* related that when one of their correspondents called at the Conservative Central Office to ask whether any special literature had been issued, dealing with the position of the Irish Loyalists in view of the expected discussion at the Plymouth Conference of the Party, an official blandly made answer: "No, oh, no! You see that question is quite dead now."¹

Other questions of vital importance to Conservatism seemed to be dead also. No one at headquarters was apparently troubling about Socialism. Nothing had been done to limit the political power of the Trade Unions. The Reform of the House of Lords had been indefinitely postponed at the instance of Lord Curzon. As Mr. Winston Churchill had foretold at the Aldwych Club on May 4, 1923, the Government had proved entirely unprovocative and unaggressive, it had raised none

¹ Date of October 23, 1923.

of the old flags of fierce political controversy. "Free Trade was not to be interfered with." The attempts to restore the veto of the House of Lords and to repeal the Parliament Act had been "relegated to a remote, hypothetical and nebulous futurity." The Home Rule settlement had been "loyally and skilfully carried out by this Unionist and Die-Hard Administration." As for taxation, there was no Government which to-day "made more severe demands upon the owners of property than this high Tory Government," And Mr. Churchill went on to show that resistance to Socialism had been paralysed by quarrels between the Constitutional elements so that the common peril had been lost to sight :

Thus we see not only Liberals of the Left, but Conservatives of the Right, assuring the country that there is no danger of Socialism or of a Socialist Government, that it is a mere bogey or bugbear not worthy of serious attention ; that the Labour leaders are very sensible and honest men, who would never think of carrying out the policy they are pledged to.

As a result of all this the credit of the Conservative Government had declined at an astonishing rate and might collapse in two years, perhaps in less. When that day came Mr. Churchill declared :

It will be said on every side, "The Coalition was tried ; it was unpopular. The Tories have tried ; they have failed. The Liberals are still quarrelling among themselves. Now it is the turn of the Labour Party. Let them have their chance." And millions of voters will respond to this argument. And, without any real battle or strong political contest, a Socialist Government may be installed in power in a single day. . . . I cannot but feel that this is a very grave possibility.¹

These prophetic words were fulfilled just seven months later when the Government, throwing all other considerations aside, went to the country on the issue of Protection. By that time dissatisfaction had deepened ; unemployment, though considerably less than in the preceding year, was still acute ; agriculture was declining ; most of the great trades were suffering from foreign competition.

It was at this crisis in October that the Imperial Conference met, and on October 9 Mr. Bruce, the Australian Premier, put forward a bold scheme of Imperial Preference, according to which the food supply of Great Britain would be provided by

¹ *The Times*, May 5, 1923,

the Empire to the exclusion of the foreigner, without raising the price to the consumer. As a necessary prelude to this, he advocated a thoroughgoing system of Protection in England. Further speeches on these lines by Mr. Bruce, and by Mr. Massey on behalf of New Zealand, emboldened the Conservative Government to stake everything on this issue, and at the Plymouth Conference of the Unionist Association on October 25 Mr. Baldwin announced his conviction that Protection was the only remedy for unemployment.

The declaration was received with cheers, but as this policy entailed a General Election—owing to Mr. Bonar Law's pledge the previous year not to make any fundamental change in the fiscal system during the lifetime of the present Government—many ardent Protectionists felt it to be a grave imprudence and took the view that tightening up the Safeguarding of Industries Act would provide the necessary fiscal reforms. To go to the country on the issue of Protection with, inevitably, the accompanying scare of food taxes was to imperil the position of the Party, which, otherwise, might reasonably look forward to another three years of office. It was a gambler's throw which, if successful, might have proved the salvation of the country; unfortunately it failed and brought the Government crashing to the ground.

At the General Election that took place on December 6, 1923, the Conservatives lost 107 seats and gained 18, so that they were left with a total loss of 89. The state of the three Parties was then as follows :

Conservatives	258
" Labour Party "	192
Liberals	156

The Conservatives were thus still the largest party, but without a majority enabling them to carry on the Government. It now depended on the Liberals to decide whether to support the Conservatives or to put the Labour Party into office. The question was quickly settled by Mr. Asquith, who, at a meeting at the National Liberal Club on December 18, declared that he would not lift a finger to save the present Government. Accordingly when the Labour Party moved their vote of censure against the Government on January 17, 1924, it met with strong support from the Liberals and was carried on the 21st by a majority of 77. On the following day the Labour Party assumed office under the Premiership of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald,

A contributing cause of the debacle was undoubtedly the attitude adopted by the Beaverbrook and Rothermere Press, which, after persistently advocating Imperial Preference and Protection respectively, at the last moment helped to weaken confidence in Mr. Baldwin's policy. In view of the controversy which took place throughout 1930 between these two Press magnates and the Conservative Party still under the leadership of Mr. Baldwin, it may be well to recall the part played by the former in the General Election of 1923.

The contention of Lord Beaverbrook, who declared himself whole-heartedly for Imperial Preference, was that the Government should not have been content with half measures by only going out for Protection. "Home Protection will not restore the balance of lost markets. Only the Empire can do that."¹ And again: "The hope of the country lies in the Empire. The vote of each individual should be given to any candidate who is ready to fight strenuously for the realisation of the Imperial ideal."² So far so good, but Lord Beaverbrook went on to accuse Mr. Baldwin of pusillanimity and to make the astonishing suggestion that the Liberals might be better counted on to carry out the necessary tariff reforms:

The declared tariff policy of the Conservative Party is founded, not on conviction but on fear. . . . The Liberals appear to be ready to give subsidies on shipping which would be in effect a substantial preference on Canadian wheat and Australian meat. Whatever British Government adopts this course ought to make sure that it gets an equally substantial return in increased preference from the Dominions for our manufactured goods. . . . The Conservatives are only holding back from the full policy because their leader is afraid. The Liberals, on the other hand, are advancing slowly towards the conception of Imperial Preference.³

A few days later Lord Beaverbrook declared that he would vote against Labour every time—"because Labour has no Imperial policy at all"—but for a Conservative or Liberal provided only he were an Imperialist.⁴

How Lord Beaverbrook managed to discern any movement on the part of the Liberals towards Imperial Preference or towards any kind of tariff reform is difficult to understand in view of the fact that, at this very moment, the Asquithians were advocating even the abolition of the Safeguarding duties introduced by the Coalition. A rumour had gone round that

¹ *Sunday Express*, December 2, 1923.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1923.

⁴ *Ibid.*, December 2, 1923.

Mr. Lloyd George, who was then in America, was going to declare for Protection, which had encouraged the Conservatives to take a bold line. Whether Mr. Lloyd George ever contemplated anything of the kind or whether the rumour had been set on foot in order to lead the Conservatives into a hazardous position has never been revealed. At any rate on his arrival in England on November 9 Mr. Lloyd George declared himself to be an unswerving Free-trader. So much, then, for the Liberal support on which Lord Beaverbrook had counted.

Meanwhile Lord Rothermere seemed to have been overcome with sudden misgivings with regard to Protection itself. "Free Trade has so many advocates amongst leading bankers, merchants, manufacturers, etc."—including Sir Alfred Mond—so that: "Pronounced Protectionist though I am, I feel that Free Trade should be given one more chance until the nation has had time and opportunity to make up its mind."

But Lord Rothermere then went on to put his finger on the weak spot in the Conservative plan of campaign: "There should be active discussion and debate in every town and village and hamlet in Great Britain before any such stupendous change is made." Mr. Baldwin's action had been "too precipitate; the country had not been prepared for it." Even the Conservatives themselves seemed divided on the question. "Whilst Mr. Baldwin talks about Protection, Admiral Sir Reginald Hall (then Principal Agent of the Party) says they only intend to safeguard industries which they might have done under the Safeguarding of Industries Act and thus have entirely avoided a General Election."¹

With regard to the unpreparedness of the Conservative Party for the General Election of December 6, 1923, Lord Rothermere undoubtedly was right. Their main idea after their triumph at the polls in the previous year had been, as related earlier in this chapter, to rest upon their laurels instead of following up their advantage by an energetic educative campaign. For this inertia the Conservative Central Office was largely to blame, as also for the mistaken counsels offered to the Prime Minister. As Sir Archibald Salvidge said at a meeting of the Liverpool Conservative Association: "Could there possibly be a more important duty attaching to any political party than the duty of having at Headquarters those who were competent to advise the leader on the propriety of

¹ Article by Lord Rothermere, "Should Free Trade have one more Chance?" in *Sunday Pictorial*, November 25, 1923.

a General Election? . . . What could possibly have been of greater importance than that the Prime Minister should have been acquainted with the mind of the Party as ascertained throughout the provincial divisions, whether favourable or unfavourable. . . . Although he was a Protectionist, if he had to decide between supporting a policy which the country had vetoed and which meant splitting and ruining the Conservative Party and keeping the present Socialist Government in power, he would drop Protection as a cardinal part of the policy of the Conservative Party."¹

This was the opinion of many Conservatives who, whilst entirely sharing Mr. Baldwin's view of the desirability of extending tariff reform beyond the limits of the Safeguarding of Industries Act, felt that it was not worth while to jeopardise the whole future of the Party on a single issue. But Mr. Baldwin and his advisers held this to be the only thing that mattered, and in consequence at the Election all other considerations were lost to sight and little attention was paid to the growing danger of Socialism. Even the *Morning Post*, always loyal to the Conservative Party, was obliged to admit defects in its organisation whilst endeavouring to excuse them on the score that the Central Office "had not long been emancipated from the paralysing influence of the Coalition." At the same time it pointed out that the local Conservative associations were largely to blame for having "remained supine" whilst "the Socialists were hard at work," and went on to observe: "A barrister who does not take the trouble to study his brief must expect to receive an adverse verdict."²

Lord Rothermere's criticism of the Conservative Party's organisation was thus clearly justified, and there was again a good deal of unpleasant truth in his further strictures on the way Anglo-French relations had been strained during its period of office. Certain Conservative Ministers—not Mr. Baldwin—had shown "marked hostility to France" and were "doing their utmost to provoke a breach of the Entente."³

But it was difficult to follow Lord Rothermere's line of thought when he went on to say that for this reason he found it "extremely difficult to commend the Conservative Party's leaders to the electorate at this grave juncture."⁴ What other Party was likely to be more just to France? Three weeks later, when the election was over, Lord Rothermere proceeded to urge a fusion between the Liberals and Conser-

¹ *Morning Post*, January 24, 1924.

² *Ibid.*, January 7, 1924.

³ *Sunday Pictorial*, December 2, 1923.

⁴ *Ibid.*

vatives so as "to form a joint Ministry with Mr. Asquith as its head" in order to prevent the Socialists taking office.¹

But how could any alliance with the Liberals further the cause of the Entente? Had not Mr. Asquith's fall from power in 1916 been brought about by public dissatisfaction at his want of energy in conducting the War and the relations which were generally believed to exist between his entourage and certain friends of Germany? And in proposing a return to a Coalition Government Lord Rothermere appeared to have forgotten what he had said in the previous year when urging the break-up of Mr. Lloyd George's Government:

The unpopularity of the Coalition transcends all modern tendencies of the kind in our political history. . . . Not one undertaking of the Coalition has been fulfilled except that they have handed over Palestine to a little group of Zionist immigrants at enormous cost to the British tax-payer.

Again:

Was there ever such a squalid record? Has any British Government in the last hundred years sunk to lower depths than the present Coalition? They have betrayed everybody in turn—the farmers, the agricultural labourers, the manufacturers, the retailers, the industrial workers, the ex-Service men, the tax-payers, the loyal men and women of Ulster, the Russians, the Arabs, the Indian moderates and even our Allies.²

How, then, was salvation to be found in another Coalition?

Everyone who recognised the patriotic part played hitherto by the *Daily Mail* and other organs of the Rothermere Press, the consistent support it had given to all good causes—the Entente with France, the Irish loyalists, control of public expenditure under the slogan of "Anti-Waste," and again the unrelenting fight it had put up against subversive movements—Socialism, Pacifism, Bolshevism and their allies—could only regret that at this crucial juncture its wide influence should be used to defeat the very principles for which it had stood in the past. The remedy for the deplorable condition in which the Conservative Party found itself at the end of 1923 was not a compromise with Liberalism, but a return to true Conservatism with the courage of its opinions and a more vigorous opposition to the influences of international Socialism. "Die-Hardism" had procured the triumph of the Conservative Party in November 1922; surrender to the forces of subversion had ensured its defeat in December 1923.

¹ *Sunday Pictorial*, December 23, 1923.

² *Ibid.*, March 12, 1922.

CHAPTER XII

DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL

THE advent of the "Labour Party" to office in 1924 was a deep humiliation to every patriotic citizen. At first it seemed almost unbelievable that only five years after the War had ended the Government of this country should be actually in the hands of men who had failed her in her hour of need, some of whom had even given encouragement to the enemy. The author of the articles broadcasted by the Germans on the outbreak of war, the man whom the sailors refused to carry to Russia—now Prime Minister. The "heroic champion of the conscientious objectors"—Chancellor of the Exchequer. The man who misled us as to Germany's intentions and still proclaimed himself a pro-German—Lord Chancellor. The promoters of the Leeds Conference, of the Council of Action and a host of members of the I.L.P., Union of Democratic Control and other Pacifist organisations raised to posts of honour in the State. To some of us the triumphal march of conquering German legions down Whitehall would have been less bitter. We closed our eyes in shame as we passed the Cenotaph. Was it for this they fought? We remembered the resolution passed at the mass meeting of engineers at Woolwich in 1918:

To hell with Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden . . . the engineers of Woolwich Arsenal are Englishmen and they demand to be led by men who love their country. God save England.¹

But these sentiments were now quite out-of-date. They certainly did not appear to be shared by the Constitutional Press, which broke out into appreciative paragraphs on the very people whose anti-patriotic activities had been the objects of their denunciation throughout, and after, the War.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives prided themselves on accepting

¹ *The Times*, April 4, 1918.

their defeat in a thoroughly "sporting" spirit. They were disappointed of course, but not chastened. The great thing was "to go out smiling." This habit of treating politics as a game in which the rules of sport and not the rules of war must be observed has been peculiar to the Conservative Party during the past twelve years. Largely composed of men brought up at public schools, they have been unable to divest themselves of the idea that Parliament is a prolonged cricket match in which one's side comes in to bat and, being fairly bowled, goes out again to field with great good humour. And at the end of each innings both elevens shake hands over drinks and smokes in the pavilion.

This might have been comprehensible when the contest lay between Whigs and Tories or Liberals and Unionists, whose opposing political theories were concerned with no fundamental changes in the existing social order. On both sides the cricket spirit could then be maintained with safety.

But with the advent of the "Labour" Party to the field of politics, an entirely different element had been introduced. It was not only a question of the harm they had done in the past, but of the havoc they might work in the future. As Mr. Lloyd George had said, the "peril" was "the phenomenal rise to power of a new party with new purposes of the most subversive character. It calls itself Labour, but it is really Socialist . . . Socialism is fighting . . . to destroy everything that the great prophets and leaders laboured for generations to build up."

Faced by such a foe as this, politics had ceased to be a game and had become a war in which there could be no fraternising between the trenches if it was to be brought to a successful conclusion. But the Conservatives declined to see it in this light, they declined even to regard it as a sport to be played with all the rigour of the game, for, as Mr. Robert Hichens makes one of his characters say with regard to bridge-playing: "One can't fight well if one is full of sympathy and consideration for one's enemies." In accordance with this spirit, the word of command went out in 1923 that the triumph of the Labour Party was to be marred by no adverse criticism. During one of the periodic reorganisations to which the Conservative Central Office has been subjected in the course of the last few years, it was stated in the Press at that date:

The most striking feature of the suggested reorganisation is that direct attacks on Socialism would cease at once. A forward and positive policy of social reform is suggested instead, and an educa-

tive scheme is adumbrated whereby the electorate would be made acquainted with the fact that social reform was originally suggested by the Conservative Party.¹

At the same time the Principal Agent, Sir Reginald Hall, announced in a speech to Unionist delegates that nothing was to be said against the leaders of the Labour Government.

So long as he had a voice in affairs at the Central Office nothing should be sent out from there of a nature that should decry the King's Government. They might severely criticise some of the Government's measures, but no personalities should ever go out while he was there " [Cheers].²

So at the moment of their most severe reverse, Conservatism was to surrender its strongest weapon. The one fact that had hitherto weighed with the electorate was the war record of the Socialist leaders ;³ now these same leaders were to be acclaimed as worthy custodians of the country's safety.

The idea of the Conservative Party and the Constitutional Press was " to give Labour a chance." What they succeeded in doing was to give the Labour Party a free advertisement and rehabilitate them in the eyes of the electorate. The only impression the man in the street could gather was that the " Labour " leaders had been cruelly maligned in the past. Moreover, in accepting the term " Labour " as descriptive of the Party that had now taken office, Conservatives were directly aiding them to deceive the electorate. Mr. Dan Griffiths, writing in the *Daily Herald* after the 1923 election, pointed out that :

Four and a half million workers have voted Labour, whereas nine millions of the workers have voted anti-Labour. In other words, twice as many *workers* have voted *against* the Labour Party as have voted *for* Labour.⁴

What right, then, had the Party to claim to represent Labour? By this device they have always succeeded in capturing a number of votes that would never have gone to them had they called themselves by their true name, the " Socialist Party." It was for the Constitutional Press, and above all for the Conservative Party to show them in their true colours, instead of lending themselves to an imposture and allowing them to

¹ *Evening Standard*, February 14, 1924.

² *Morning Post*, February 7, 1924.

³ On this question see *Potted Biographies : a Dictionary of Anti-National Biography*. (Boswell Printing Company, price 6d.)

⁴ *Daily Herald*, December 27, 1923.

masquerade as a party genuinely representative of the aspirations of the working-classes.

The Labour Government itself was of course far too adroit to do anything that would frighten the electorate. All their energies were concentrated on proving that the charges hitherto brought against them were unfounded, that far from being revolutionary, they intended to make no drastic changes, that far from being anti-Imperialist, they were the staunchest supporters of the Empire, and that far from being Republicans, they were amongst His Majesty's most loyal subjects.

It is true that before the Labour Party assumed the reins of office Mr. George Lansbury, in a speech at the Shoreditch Town Hall, startled the public by observing :

One king stood up against the common people and that day he lost his head—lost it really. Later one of his descendants thought he would have a turn ; they told him to get out and he went quickly. . . . George the Fifth would be well advised to keep his finger out of the pie now.

At the great Labour rally which took place at the Albert Hall three days later, Mr. Lansbury had a marvellous reception, the " Red Flag " was sung with enthusiasm and Mr. Robert Smillie declared : " Our little rumble of revolution does not come fully yet, but it is coming ! [Applause.] It is already putting the fear of God into the hearts of our opponents ! " [Loud applause.]

But the impression created by these threats was quickly obliterated by the speeches that followed after. The honours of the evening went to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who assured his enraptured audience that : " We are a party of idealists. We are a party that away in the dreamland of imagination dwells in the social organisation, fairer and more perfect than any organisation that mankind has ever known." ¹

The Labour Party thus appeared to be simply a large missionary society out to regenerate the world by purely spiritual means.

In accordance with this rôle an olive-branch was dispatched to France. Who had dared to say the Labour Party were pro-German ? It would now be seen that they were as staunch supporters of the Entente as of the Empire, the Monarchy and the Constitution. It is interesting to compare their utterances before and after their accession to office. Thus, on August 7, 1922, a leading article in the official organ of the Party had

¹ *Daily Herald*, January 9, 1924.

observed in connection with the meeting of Allied Prime Ministers in London :

For the good of Europe and of the world, we hope that, at to-day's meeting, Mr. Lloyd George will, for once in his career, stand up to Monsieur Poincaré. Too long has the British Premier allowed this country to be dragged, at the bidding of French militarism, along the road that inevitably leads to world chaos. . . . Let Mr. Lloyd George to-day take the necessary steps to curb France. Cause has been given over and over again, and by her decision to act alone in the attempt to make Germany a vassal State, France has broken the Entente.

But now the Labour Party were in office, it seemed that nothing lay nearer to their hearts than the maintenance of the Entente, and Mr. MacDonald, only four days after his accession to office, hastened to write a personal letter expressed in the most friendly terms to Monsieur Poincaré himself. Indeed, it appears that hitherto it had not been the Labour Party, but the people of England who had attributed militarist intentions to France. "Thus," wrote Mr. MacDonald in a subsequent letter to Monsieur Poincaré, on February 21, "it has come about that the people in this country regard with anxiety what appears to them to be the determination of France to ruin Germany and to dominate the Continent . . . that they feel apprehensive of the large military and aerial establishments maintained, not only in Eastern, but in Western France," etc.¹

The organ of Mr. MacDonald's own Party had certainly done nothing to allay these apprehensions which were nowhere observable in the minds of the general public. It was not "the people" who had forgotten the War!

Monsieur Poincaré, whilst "much touched" by Mr. MacDonald's new-found affection for France, replied with his habitual firmness, and accepted Mr. MacDonald's assurances on the aberrations of the British public. "Those of your countrymen," he wrote on February 25, "who believe that France dreams, or has dreamt, of the political or economic annihilation of Germany are mistaken." As to French militarism he added: "Are there really Englishmen who suppose that France would be capable of making fratricidal preparations against their country? Our military and aerial establishments are exclusively designed to defend us against attempted German revenge."¹

¹ *Morning Post*, March 3, 1924.

All then appeared to be harmony between the two countries, and the real effect of a British Labour Government on France was not seen until its repercussion took place in the form of the Cartel des Gauches—or Coalition of Radicals and Socialists—under Monsieur Herriot, which came into power on May 11 of that year and removed Monsieur Poincaré from office. The recall of the French Ambassador in Great Britain, the Comte de Saint-Aulaire, known to be friendly towards the Conservative Party, the recognition of Russia by France on October 16, and the elaboration of the "Geneva Protocol" were further sequels to this event.

The last point takes us back to the question of Germany which we left at the moment when, just before the fall of the Conservative Government, the Germans appealed to the Reparations Commission for an investigation of the whole matter by experts.

As a result of this, the Reparations Commission appointed two committees of experts: (1) The Dawes Committee, with General Charles G. Dawes as chairman, to investigate the German Budget and currency, and (2) "Committee No. 2," with Sir R. MacKenna as chairman, to investigate the amount of exported German capital and "encourage its return." (!)

The reports of both Committees were published on April 9, 1924, and that of the former put forward what became known as the "Dawes Plan," which was immediately accepted both by Germany and the Reparations Commission. France, still under Monsieur Poincaré, gave no decision, but on the accession of the "Cartel" in the following month the situation changed. At the London Conference of Allied Powers (July 16–August 16) the Dawes Report was accepted and came into force on September 1. An office for Reparation payments was then established in Berlin. The problem of Reparations was now believed to be finally settled.

At this moment the League of Nations held its Fifth Assembly in Geneva, attended by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Monsieur Herriot. The outcome of their co-operation was the famous "Geneva Protocol" officially described as the "Arbitration and Sanctions Protocol." The object of this scheme was compulsory arbitration by which all international disputes would be submitted to the League and the country which refused to abide by its decisions would have "Sanctions" applied to it by the other nations composing the League. These Sanctions might be confined to economic pressure, but might also take the form of naval or military operations.

As a result of this arrangement, any Power that did not go to the rescue of the Power designated by the League would be coerced, if necessary, by the British Navy, which would lead to the latter being at the disposal of the League of Nations for its purposes. This plan, supported by most of the Labour Party and which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald declared would "bring an inexhaustible harvest of blessing to Europe," met with strong disapproval in Great Britain and the Dominions. The fall of the Labour Government prevented its realisation.

RUSSIA

After the gesture to France came the pact of friendship with Russia. This question had been one of the first to occupy the attention of the "Labour" Government and only nine days after his accession to office Mr. Ramsay MacDonald hastened to fulfil his election pledge by abjuring what he termed "the pompous folly of holding aloof from recognition of the Soviet Government."

The death of Lenin had occurred on January 21, and his place was taken by Rykov, but the real rulers of Russia from this moment were the Triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kameneff and Stalin. The first of these was the most important from the point of view of Great Britain.

Zinoviev, alias Apfelbaum, whose real name was Ovse Gershon Aronovitch Radomislsky, the son of a Jewish trader in Novomirgorod, born in 1883, was not only a member of the Triumvirate, but also President of the Third International, at the Congresses of which he distinguished himself by his diatribes against Capitalist States and particularly against the British Empire. As Lord Emmott, in an excellent speech in the House of Lords on March 26, 1924, pointed out :

The Communist International exists, as your Lordships know, to propagate Bolshevism, to bring about Bolshevist revolutions everywhere, to discredit Parliamentary institutions, to suppress the Capitalist and to confiscate capital. Zinoviev, its head, has in recent months, day after day, week after week, been denouncing in most violent language foreign capitalists and foreign bourgeois and explaining with the utmost cynicism the sinister methods employed by the Communist International to stir up revolution in other countries.

It was with the Government of which Zinoviev was one of the three rulers in chief that the Labour Party now entered into negotiations, and on February 1 Mr. Ramsay MacDonald

dispatched a Note to Moscow recognising the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) as the "de jure rulers of those territories of the old Russian Empire which acknowledged their authority." It should be noted that amongst these territories was included the Socialist Republic of Georgia, which had never acknowledged the authority of the Soviet Government, but had been reduced to submission by force of arms accompanied by the utmost brutality.

On April 9 a Russian delegation arrived in London and Rakovsky, the Soviet representative in England, took his place at its head, at the same time assuming the status of chargé d'affaires pending the appointment of an ambassador. The Conference, summoned to discuss terms of recognition, met on April 14, and continued its sittings until August when, after several hitches and even a rupture on August 5, a draft Treaty with Russia was signed on August 8 by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Ponsonby on one hand and Rakovsky, Joffe, Scheinmann, Radchenko and Tomskey on the other. The terms of this "fantastic treaty," as Mr. Mowat points out, were inexplicable. The heading ran: "General Treaty between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." "The title of the King was omitted as a concession, presumably, to Soviet feelings." Whilst recognising claims of British loan-holders the Government of Great Britain also admitted Soviet counter-claims for British intervention in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution. Further, the members of the Russian Trade Delegation were to be counted as members of the Union Embassy and were to enjoy full diplomatic privileges and immunities.¹

This was, of course, to open the door to unlimited intrigue on the part of Soviet agents whose correspondence with Moscow was no longer to be subject to supervision. Needless to say, the diplomatic bag of the Soviet representatives swelled to far larger proportions than that of any foreign Embassy in London. The crowning folly of the document was the proposal to raise a loan for Russia in order to enable her to trade with Great Britain. This was too much even for Mr. Lloyd George, who now summoned the Liberals to protest against the Treaty, and continued up to the eve of the General Election in October to ridicule the idea of the Soviet loan. "Mr. MacDonald said the Soviet loan was part of his remedy for unemployment. We should lend £30,000,000 to Russia and the Russians would buy £20,000,000 worth of goods from

¹ *A History of European Diplomacy, 1914-25* pp 284-6.

us. Well, the man who runs a business like that is not fit to run a coffee-stall."¹ The Soviet leaders had good reason to congratulate themselves on the bargain they had made, as Kameneff showed in his speech to the Moscow Party Functionaries on August 22, 1924. In answering the questions "What does the Treaty give us? And what do we give England?" Kameneff replied:

This document is not merely an act of recognition. It contains the pledge on the part of the English Government to guarantee a loan to be granted to our Republic. This guarantee means that if the Soviet Government after the conclusion of a loan treaty, should, for any reason, refuse payment of this loan, then the English Government is pledged to pay the same instead of the Soviet Government. Thus the English Government guarantees the stability of the Soviet power, etc.

Kameneff then went on to explain in answer to the second question, "What do we give to England?" that they had agreed to satisfy the claims of English subjects against them, but their counter-claims for damage done by British intervention in Russia would far exceed these. And anyhow the Soviet Government was committed to nothing:

We have undertaken no concrete obligations expressed in definite figures. We have only undertaken to continue negotiations. On the other hand the English Government has undertaken in the event of a favourable conclusion to these negotiations . . . to guarantee our loan.²

Clearly it was a case of "heads we win, tails you lose" for the Bolsheviks! The obvious use to which money supplied to Russia would be put was the financing of propaganda against Great Britain.

Mr. MacDonald himself was well aware of the anti-British sentiments openly expressed by the Soviet leaders. At the first meeting of the Conference in April he had referred to the violent diatribes recently uttered by Zinoviev, and these had not been mitigated by the conciliatory attitude of the British Government. On the contrary, the Soviet Foreign Commissariat issued a communication indignantly denying reports published in the foreign Press, to the effect that the Soviet Government intended to placate Great Britain by closing the school for anti-British propaganda at Tashkent

¹ Speech at Camberwell on October 27, 1924.

² *Inprecorr*, September 11, 1924, p. 698.

and declaring that "there had not been and there could not be the slightest retreat in the policy of the Soviet Government towards the oppressed Eastern peoples now struggling for full independence."¹

At the Congress of the Third International in July practical methods were discussed for mobilising Asia's millions. "The official spokesman, Manuilsky, asked the Congress to consider 'whether it is possible to shatter Britain's might without mobilising these Colonial masses.' . . . Zinoviev repeated the time-worn phrase—first coined by Lenin—'that temporarily it was necessary to support MacDonald's counter-revolutionary Government as a rope supports a hanging man.'"

In the course of his five-hour speech Zinoviev related how Newbold (the late Communist Member for Motherwell) had worried him and Bukharin to death for a whole evening by asking whether he might, in exceptional circumstances, speak against the Parliamentary Labour Party. "We told him: Yes. That is what you are there for!"

And Zinoviev went on to observe:

We must adopt catchwords easily understood by the masses. That of "a Labour Government" is the most alluring and popular formula for enlisting the masses in favour of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Labour Party was thus to be made to pave the way for its own destruction:

The workers [Zinoviev continued] are still attached to MacDonald, they are still full of illusions. . . . Our party in England must fight MacDonald in order that the working-classes, when they realise his meanness, should understand that we, the Communists, were the first to estimate him at his true value.¹

The Labour Party received these insults with the utmost meekness. Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had been mainly instrumental in carrying out negotiations, said, in supporting the Treaty with the Soviet Government, in the House of Commons on August 6: "Recognition is the right move—not to give the flabby handshake of patronage, but the firm grasp of friendship."¹

Lord Parmoor, who defended the cause of the Bolsheviks in the House of Lords, fared no better at their hands:

"Lord Parmoor," the *Pravda* (organ of the Russian Com-

¹ *The Times*, July 7, 1924.

Ibid., August 7, 1924.

munist Party) observed, "is a typical Quaker, a reformist, a sugar-mouthed humanitarian Peer of the Realm, who during the War worked hard to convert the anti-militarist elements of the Labour movement into despicable Socialist Pacifists."

This paragraph was quoted with great effect by Lord Curzon (of Kedleston) in the course of a forcible and witty speech during the debate on Russia of March 26.¹ He described with great eloquence the activities of the Soviet Government to stir up rebellion in Ireland in the past, and in India, South Africa and Persia at the present moment.

"Is there any cessation in the active and pestilent propaganda against British institutions, British influence and the British Empire, which has been going on unremittingly for years, and which was in full blast when I left the Foreign Office between two and three months ago?" And after referring to the fate of the independent States of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Daghestan, etc., which had been absorbed by Soviet Russia, Lord Curzon declared that "the democracy of England, which thinks in holding out the hand of friendship to Russia it is clasping hands with a democratic Government, is in reality only exchanging courtesies with the most terrible and grinding of despotisms that has been known in modern times."

Five months later, when the Treaty with Russia was about to be signed, Lord Curzon returned again to the charge and ridiculed the whole proceedings in his finest vein of sarcasm. Even Mr. Lloyd George, he pointed out, who for the last six years had been "a passionate advocate of an agreement with the Bolsheviks" and who, since his first attempt at Prinkipo in 1919, had held repeated Conferences in order "to conclude some sort of agreement with these people," even Mr. Lloyd George, "the real parent of these efforts," was aghast at the terms of the Treaty.

Lord Parmoor had announced that the Government had extracted a promise from the representatives of Russia to refrain from anti-British propaganda in any part of the Empire; Lord Curzon reminded the House that just the same guarantees had been given at the time of the Trade Agreement (in 1921) and had been secured by him only eighteen months earlier—"therefore when the noble and learned Lord [Lord Parmoor] in the innocence of his heart comes here and tells us he has extracted this declaration and that His Majesty's

¹ *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, vol. lvi, col. 1060.

Government confidently look forward to its scrupulous fulfilment, those assurances go off my back like water off"—Lord Curzon had nearly said "a duck's back," but skilfully saved the situation by saying "like water off a surface of marble."

If only warnings had not glided off that same marble surface in the early days of Bolshevism! If only, when the first reports came in of the Soviet Government's plans for the destruction of the British Empire, Lord Curzon, then in control of the Foreign Office, had urged the carrying out of that campaign which was to prevent the spread of the infection of these shores! If only he had realised during his own spell of power the futility of extracting promises from the sworn enemies of England who made no secret of their determination to undermine her power at every point of the Empire! If, as he now said, their anti-British propaganda was still in full blast when he left the Foreign Office, how was it that the *Annual Register* for 1923 could state that during his term of office "Anglo-Russian relations were left on a firmer basis than before"?¹

We may marvel at the meekness with which the Labour Party have always accepted the sneers and insults of the Soviet Government; as members of the Second International founded on Marxian doctrines, it is only natural that they should feel some sympathy with a Government that has attempted to carry those doctrines into practice. The difference between the Second and Third International is after all only one of method. The really amazing thing is that Liberals and Conservatives who have never entertained a belief in Marxism should, when in office, have been willing to parley with the avowed enemies of the existing social order. Whilst forming the Opposition they might expostulate, denounce, employ all the oratory at their command, but when in power they seemed as afraid to take action as the Socialists themselves. Before the Bolshevist menace, statesmen of all parties and of all countries appear to have been frozen into immobility and incapable of resistance "as before the Gorgon's Head."

As months went by, public opinion hardened against the Socialist Government. Their supporters became impatient at the failure to carry out Socialist measures. The plan of the Capital Levy had been defeated on April 2, the nationalisation of the mines on May 20. The Budget had proved to

be merely a Free Trade one—no increase in the income-tax to satisfy those who yearned to search the pockets of the "capitalists," but the renunciation of all measures for Imperial Preference and the repeal of the MacKenna duties which threw numbers of skilled mechanics out of work.

As to unemployment, for which the Labour Party in their "Appeal to the Nation" at the General Election had said they alone had a "positive remedy," nothing more had been heard about this panacea and the only noteworthy contribution to the Debates that had taken place on the subject was the famous exclamation of Mr. Tom Shaw :

Does anybody think that we can produce schemes like rabbits out of our hat ?¹

The solution to the problem, then as now, was found in increasing unemployment benefit.

On September 13, 1924, the *Morning Post* announced that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had been presented with a motor-car and 30,000 Preference Shares in McVitie & Price's biscuit factory for its upkeep, by the Chairman of that Company, Sir Alexander Grant, who was presented three months later with a baronetcy in recognition of his public services. Nothing of this transpired at the time or indeed until it was revealed by the *Morning Post* six months later. On March 15, three days after the allotment of the shares, Mr. MacDonald, in addressing the London Press Club, said that when he left office he would have to return to journalism and referred touchingly to the unpaid bills his post would bring.² That a representative of "Labour" who knew himself to be in safe possession of at least £2,000 a year for life should contemplate financial embarrassments in the future was not calculated to hearten the rank and file of his supporters who were contriving to make ends meet on considerably less than that sum. However little one might doubt Mr. MacDonald's integrity, it was difficult henceforth to believe in his Socialism. Moreover, had not Socialists always pointed out the iniquity of that "surplus value" which instead of going into the pockets of the workers went to provide profits for the capitalist and the shareholder ? Yet here was one of the leading lights of Socialism accepting 30,000 shares made out of profits on the people's bread and biscuits—for McVitie & Price are amongst the foremost bakers of Edinburgh. What would

¹ Debate of March 10, 1924.

² *The Times*, March 17, 1924.

"Daddy Marx" have said to this transaction? It is true, however, that Marx himself had felt no scruples about accepting surplus value accruing from the the cotton industry of his friend Friedrich Engels.

But if Socialists were disappointed at the abandonment of the principles for which the "Labour" Party stood, those Conservatives who had declared that "a Labour Government could do no harm" proved to have been hardly justified in their predictions. The "Labour" Party had certainly repudiated Communism officially by reaffirming at its Annual Conference the decision against affiliation with the C.P.G.B. (Communist Party of Great Britain) and by adding a rule that Communists should not be eligible as Labour candidates. Again as regards the Empire, except in the blow dealt to Imperial Preference and the obstruction of the new naval base at Singapore, the Labour Party had displayed surprising regard for Imperial interests.

But it must be remembered that as a minority Government their only chance of consolidating their position was to "go slow" and win the confidence of the electorate. To display sympathy with agitators at home or abroad, or to pursue a policy whilst in office such as they advocated after leaving it with regard to China, would have been to court immediate disaster. The real policy of "Labour" can only be judged when it has achieved a majority and is able to carry out its schemes without hindrance from the constitutional parties. Until then it is bound to play a double part, on one hand keeping in with the Extremists through whom it has climbed to power, and on the other overcoming the doubts of the electorate as to its "fitness to govern." Owing to the difficulty of maintaining itself in this precarious position, between the devil of Communism and the deep sea of public opinion, the "Labour" Government of 1924 came to grief in the autumn of the year.

It was the British Communists who brought matters to a head. Had they been content to wait, the Anglo-Russian Treaty might possibly have been carried through in the teeth of opposition and the Labour Party have continued long enough in office to be able to start on what they described at the ensuing General Election as a "forward march to a really Socialist Commonwealth." The C.P.G.B. spoilt everything by rushing in with an inflammatory Manifesto. This appeared in the organ of the Party, *The Workers' Weekly* of July 25, 1924, under the heading of "An Open Letter to the Fighting

Forces," and the following appeal was made to soldiers, sailors and airmen :

The Communist Party calls upon you to begin the task of not only organising passive resistance when war is declared, or when an industrial dispute involves you, but to definitely and categorically let it be known that neither in the class war nor a military war will you turn your guns on your fellow-workers, but instead will line up with your fellow-workers in an attack upon the exploiters and capitalists, and will use your arms on the side of your own class.

Form committees in every barracks, aerodrome and ship. Let this be the nucleus of an organisation that will prepare the whole of the soldiers, sailors and airmen, not merely to refuse to go to war, or to refuse to shoot strikers during industrial conflicts, but will make it possible for the workers, peasants and soldiers, sailors and airmen, to go forward in a common attack upon the capitalists, and smash capitalism for ever, and institute the reign of the whole working-class.

Refuse to shoot your fellow-workers.

Refuse to fight for profit.

Turn your weapons on your oppressors.

The attention of the public was drawn to this by an article in the *Morning Post* which urged that action should be taken, and after some days of deliberation the law was put in motion. Detectives visited the headquarters of the Communist Party in King Street, and on August 5 John Ross Campbell, editor of the *Workers' Weekly*, was arrested.

Campbell, who was a leading member of the C.P.G.B., had recently been editing *The Worker*, the British organ of the Red International of Labour Unions (i.e. the *Profintern* of Moscow) and he was now editing the *Workers' Weekly* during the absence through illness of its regular editor, R. Palme-Dutt. As the official organ of the C.P.G.B., the British branch of the Third (Communist) International of Moscow, it was obvious whence the *Workers' Weekly* took its orders, and that the real authors of the Manifesto were the Soviet leaders with whom the British Government were signing a Treaty. This naturally placed the Labour Party in an extremely awkward position and the slippery path between the devil and the deep sea became more than ever difficult to tread. As usual they resorted to compromise—ordered Campbell to be arrested on a charge of sedition, then remanded and finally discharged and allowed to leave the Court a free man. This decision was reached under severe pressure, not only from the Communists, but from members of the Labour Party itself. The *New Leader*, organ

of the I.L.P.—to which 26 members of the "Labour" Government at that moment belonged—characterised the arrest of Campbell as "a shocking error of judgment."

"That any Labour Minister should have dreamed of prosecuting a workers' paper (!) for calling on the troops to remember their duty to their class if they should be used in labour disputes, would have seemed incredible before we took office. Incredible it is no longer, but it is unpardonable. The Government has acted properly in mending the mischief, but the warning is clear for all of us to read."¹

Campbell in publishing the appeal to the forces had indeed only acted in accordance with the policy of certain leading I.L.P.ers. R. C. Wallhead, then Chairman of the I.L.P., in his amicable debate with Arthur MacManus, Chairman of the Communist Party, on August 30, 1921, of that year had said :

My friend MacManus talks of revolution. I want to see that revolution brought about. . . . I am prepared to arm the proletariat when they have got the means of doing it. . . . The Communist Party . . . lay it down that you must exercise illegal methods of propaganda ; you must use that propaganda to corrupt the Army and Navy. Well, that's all right.²

The only thing the I.L.P. did not want was to come up against the police. In doing this, Campbell had committed a tactical error—nothing more. It was another illustration of the point that Communists and Socialists differ not at all in aim, but only in method. And of the two the Communists choose the more courageous part.

But this time the Socialists had sailed too near the wind. The presence of Tomskey, Chairman of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, at the Hull Conference of the T.U.C. this September, further alarmed public opinion, and when it was perceived how cordially this Soviet emissary was received by organised Labour and the resolution was passed to send a Trade Union delegation to Russia, the growing *rapprochement* between Left Wing Trade Unionists and the Bolsheviks became still more apparent.

At the annual Conservative Conference in October the Duke of Northumberland once more sounded a call to arms. Mr. Baldwin, however—the *Annual Register* observes—"hardly rose to the occasion," and it was left to Mr. Neville Chamberlain at Rugby to take up the challenge and utter an appeal for a strong and stable Government.

¹ *New Leader*, August 15, 1924.

² *Labour Leader*, September 1, 1921.

On October 8 a vote of censure on the Labour Government for its conduct in the Campbell case was formally moved by Sir Robert Horne in the House of Commons. The Liberals then proposed an amendment in the form of a committee to investigate the affair, and the Conservatives, by agreeing to this measure, ensured Liberal support in bringing about the defeat of the Government. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asked for a dissolution of Parliament, and a General Election was announced for October 29.

It was at this crisis, when the public were beginning to be thoroughly alarmed with regard to the Communist danger, that, through the agency of the *Daily Mail*, the bombshell of the famous "Zinoviev Letter" burst upon the country. On October 25, that is to say, four days before the General Election, this document was published in the whole Press, and in the case of the *Daily Mail* accompanied by the startling headlines :

**"MOSCOW ORDERS TO OUR REDS: GREAT PLOT
DISCLOSED YESTERDAY; PARALYSE THE ARMY
AND NAVY!"** etc.

Then followed the text of the letter, headed **VERY SECRET**, and addressed by the "Executive Committee Third International Presidium" on September 15, 1924, to the "Central Committee British Communist Party." At the foot were the signatures of Zinoviev, President of the Presidium of the I.K.K.I. (Executive Committee of the Communist International), of Kuusinen, secretary, and the name of A. MacManus, Chairman of the C.P.G.B., to whom the letter was sent.

The letter was a call to armed insurrection, less violent than the one that had formed the subject of the Campbell prosecution, and criticising the British Communist Party for its feeble propaganda work in the Army and the Navy. The strongest passage was contained in these words :

The Military Section of the British Communist Party, so far as we are aware, further suffers from a lack of specialists, the future directors of the British Red Army.

It is time you thought of forming such a group, which, together with the leaders, might be, in the event of an outbreak of active strife, the brain of the military organisation of the party.

Go attentively through the lists of the military "cells," detaching from them the more energetic and capable men, turn attention to the more talented military specialists who have for one reason or another left the Service and hold Socialist views. Attract them

into the ranks of the Communist Party if they desire honestly to serve the proletariat and desire in the future to direct not the blind mechanical forces in the service of the bourgeoisie but a national army.

Form a directing operative head of the Military Section.

All this was the habitual verbiage of the Bolsheviks with which everyone who knew their literature had long since become familiar—the same dull and didactic theorisings, the same involved and redundant phrases, that even in Russian give the impression of being translated laboriously from German. Certainly there was nothing here to stir the pulse—the Foreign Office could doubtless have extracted from its pigeon-holes hundreds of documents more lurid than this. As Mr. J. D. Gregory, who played the leading part in the affair at the Foreign Office, wrote afterwards: "People could at any time have had a whole meal off Zinoviev letters if they had wished."¹

Yet the sensation it provoked was terrific. All over the country people to whom the Bolsheviks were nothing but a name awoke as in a flash to the reality of the Red Peril. For this the headlines were largely responsible—had the same document been printed in small type on a less important page of the paper it would quite possibly have passed unnoticed. But the *Daily Mail* knew its business and the huge lettering had the desired effect.

The Conservatives were quick this time to follow up their advantage and drive the matter home to the Labour Party. The "Red Letter" undoubtedly played a great part in the defeat of the Government and the sweeping victory obtained by the Conservatives at the polls.

In view of the controversy that has raged around this famous document it may be worth while to recapitulate briefly the course of events in the light of facts that were only revealed four years later as a sequel to the "Francs Case" in which Mr. J. D. Gregory of the Foreign Office was involved.

On October 8, 1924, a City man, Mr. Conrad im Thurn, received information from a business acquaintance that an extraordinary letter had just been received from Zinoviev by the British Communist Party. By the following day Mr. im Thurn had been able to secure a copy of the document, which he sent on to the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office considered

¹ *On the Edge of Diplomacy*, by J. D. Gregory, p. 216.

it for four days and, having decided on its authenticity, sent it on to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in Manchester, who received it on October 16 and returned it the same day to the Foreign Office with instructions to ascertain its authenticity and, in the case of this being established, to draw up a draft letter of protest to the Russian Government to be sent to him for signature. This seemed unnecessary in view of the fact that the experts at the Foreign Office had given lengthy consideration to the matter and had decided that the document was authentic; however they pursued their inquiries further and, these having confirmed their opinion, a draft letter of protest was drawn up, signed by Mr. J. D. Gregory and forwarded by Sir Eyre Crowe to Mr. MacDonald at Aberavon on October 21. Mr. MacDonald made several alterations, strengthening the protest, and returned it in its revised form, but not initialled, to Sir Eyre Crowe on October 24.

Meanwhile, Mr. im Thurn, finding that no publicity had been given to the document, decided to communicate it to the Press in order, as he said, to place "the electorate in possession of the whole of the facts before they supported the policy of lending many millions of tax-payers' money to a country which was at that very moment engaged in fostering sedition in this country."

Mr. im Thurn accordingly, through a friend, informed the editor of the *Daily Mail*, Mr. Thomas Marlowe, that this document was in the possession of the Foreign Office and that the Prime Minister was trying to avoid publication. Mr. Marlowe set to work and succeeded in obtaining two copies of the letter from different sources. At the same time he heard that Mr. MacDonald's action in returning the letter to Sir Eyre Crowe on October 16 for further evidence of authenticity "was regarded by his officials as an indication that he wished to shelve it, as they were already satisfied that it was authentic, and they would not have wasted his time and their own by putting it before him if they had any doubt on that point."

Concluding, therefore, that the document was not to be made public by the Foreign Office, Mr. Marlowe resolved to take the law into his own hands, resisting the temptation to make a scoop for the *Daily Mail*, had the letter set up in type and copies sent to all the other newspapers on October 24. The news that this had been done having reached the Foreign Office, Sir Eyre Crowe, who had all along advised its publication, sent the letter himself to the Press, with the result that it

appeared in every paper on October 25 and 26 (a Sunday) as an official Foreign Office communication.

Rakovsky, the Soviet representative, of course declared the letter to be a forgery. The Labour Party, furious at these disclosures of Bolshevik intrigue at the moment when they were hoping to push through their Draft Treaty with the Soviet Government, took the same line, although the authenticity of the letter had been accepted by their leader, in revising the letter of protest to Rakovsky, and they went on to accuse the Conservatives and the *Daily Mail* of making the matter public as an election stunt to discredit the Labour Party. With far more justification might it be said that the withholding of the letter from publication was an election ruse to shield the Labour Party. As the editor of the *Daily Mail* pointed out later :

It was obvious that the official publication had been forced by my action. If it had not been for this, the letter would not have been published until after Mr. Rakovsky had received the Prime Minister's communication, and possibly not until after the Russian Minister had had time to reply to the Prime Minister. This would have taken a few days, perhaps a week, and by that time the General Election would have been over. Mr. MacDonald would have succeeded in delaying the publication until it could do his Party no harm.¹

The *Daily Mail* had therefore only done its duty to the public, and its action, as Mr. Baldwin said in the House of Commons, "was the action of a patriotic newspaper."

That Mr. Marlowe was right in his forecast of what would have happened was admitted by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when he said :

It is now perfectly clear that it was the threat of publication by the *Daily Mail* which forced the hands of the Foreign Office officials, in my absence, and without my knowledge, in the matter of sending the letter to Rakovsky and publishing it.²

So it appears that but for the *Daily Mail* not only the public would not have been enlightened, but the letter of protest would not have been sent, although Mr. MacDonald had revised it himself for presentation to the Soviet Minister.

Mr. MacDonald elsewhere explained this point by saying :

I sent it back in an altered form, expecting it to come back to me again with proofs of authenticity, but that night it was published.

¹ Letter of Mr. Marlowe to the *Observer*, March 4, 1928.

² *Daily Herald*, March 5, 1928.

But as Mr. MacDonald had already returned it once for further proofs of authenticity and these had been given, it is difficult to see how the Foreign Office officials could know that he "expected" the process to be repeated if he did not say so. Mr. MacDonald himself did not blame them at the time; on the contrary, as he stated four years later, he regarded Sir Eyre Crowe—the official mainly responsible—as "the soul of personal honour and official rectitude."¹

At the same time he observed :

The fact of the matter is that it is perfectly plain that all the hullabaloo about the Zinoviev letter at the last General Election was a dishonest and discreditable stunt worked up by men who knew it to be such.¹

And again :

You remember that terrible week-end when the Zinoviev letter was on, and you remember it was characterised as a fraud. My friends, it is a fraud, it was a fraud.²

As a matter of fact, by this time the revelations that had come to light with regard to the origins of the Zinoviev letter had only served to confirm the opinion of the Foreign Office as to its authenticity. It now transpired that the Foreign Office had not depended only on the copy of the letter procured by Mr. Im Thurn, but had been able to secure further copies from sources known to it as reliable, and that its authenticity had been established by no less than four independent sources of information.³

Chicherin was also said to have stated that the original letter sent to the Communist Party of Great Britain had been destroyed by the Secretary of the Party, Albert Inkpin.⁴ The *Evening Standard*, thereupon, sent a representative to interview Inkpin at the headquarters of the C.P.G.B. in King Street and Inkpin himself admitted that he had destroyed a document consisting of a speech by Zinoviev to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, which MacManus had sent to him from Moscow together with a covering letter marked "Secret" and containing the instructions that the contents were "strictly confidential," only to be read by members of the Central Committee of the British Communist

¹ *Daily Herald*, February 28, 1928.

² Speech at Briton Ferry on March 2, 1928. *Sunday Express*, March 3, 1928.

³ Debate in House of Commons, March 26, 1928.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1928.

Party. "But this, of course," Inkpin added, "had nothing to do with the supposed Zinoviev letter."¹ The fact then remains that a communication from Zinoviev had been destroyed by the C.P.G.B.

Whether the "Red Letter" was a good election cry is a point on which opinions differed. Mr. Gregory, whom the Labour Party afterwards gratuitously accused of making money by its publication, was shown to have been actually opposed to this step on the score that, as only copies were available, it was liable to be characterised as a forgery. It is, of course, a good rule never to base evidence on any document of which the original cannot be produced, but in this case would the original have carried greater weight? The Bolsheviks plan was always to deny everything inconvenient to them, and the actual autograph of Zinoviev would no doubt have been described as a forgery with the same ease as the copied letter, as had been done in the case of the Sisson Report where the original documents were produced.

That documents incriminating the Bolsheviks have been faked from time to time admits, however, of no denial. The Communist publication *Anti-Soviet Forgeries*, that appeared in 1927, contains a large amount of truth; the pages concerning "the arsenal" of Druzhilovsky, Orloff, Gumanski and Ziverts and their relations with certain anti-Bolshevist circles are well worth noting. The main facts here related received confirmation when these same Berlin forgers were brought to trial two years later. What *Anti-Soviet Forgeries* does not mention, however, is that one of this gang was an agent of the Cheka whose object was to discredit the anti-Bolshevist cause. There is, of course, no more certain way of weakening a case than by introducing false evidence. The *bordereau* falsely attributed to Dreyfus did more to exonerate him than all the evidence produced in his defence.

Nothing, then, is more urgent in dealing with Bolshevism than to make absolutely certain that information quoted is correct. The policy of "boring from within," advocated by Lenin, has been practised with great success by his followers everywhere, and also by other agents of the Hidden Hand. No sooner is a strongly anti-Bolshevist movement set on foot than it is penetrated by influences that render it abortive. Sensational news, capable of refutation, is supplied and really damning evidence kept out. I have seen this process repeated again and again from 1918 up to the present day.

¹ *Evening Standard*, March 20, 1928.

Besides being weakened by deliberate sabotage, the anti-Bolshevist campaign, like every good cause, has attracted into its ranks a number of adventurers who see their chance of self-advancement by exploiting the patriotic feelings of the public. In this way large sums have frequently been collected of which no effectual use has been made.

All such damage to the movement might have been avoided if the advice of the Netherlands Minister, given in the deleted passage of the Foreign Office White Paper before referred to,¹ had been followed, and collective action had been taken by all the Powers of Europe to "nip Bolshevism in the bud" at that early date of 1918 and thus prevent its spreading "over Europe and the whole world." Absolutely reliable centres of information might then have been established in every country, under the control of experts, from which propagandists could have obtained their facts, and no bombshells in the form of Zinoviev Letters would have been needed to awaken the British public to the menace of the Soviet Power. In this case Bolshevism would doubtless long since have ceased to exist.

¹ See ante, p. 88. The text of this passage will be found in my *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, p. 384.

CHAPTER XIII

CONSERVATISM IN POWER

THE victory of the Conservatives at the polls in October 1924 was the greatest victory ever gained by the Party. No less than 415 Conservatives were returned, whilst the Liberals won only 40 seats and the Labour Party was reduced to 151. The total gain to Conservatives was 161, and the total loss to the Labour Party 42.

It was a victory not only over Bolshevism, but over Socialism, and a striking illustration of the maxim that the strongest method of defence is attack. It was not the policy of a constructive programme and "no personalities" that had won the day, but a ruthless exposure of the Socialist leaders and their proposed treaty with the Bolsheviks that roused the nation against the "Labour" Party. Elections are not won by the votes of convinced Conservatives, convinced Liberals or convinced Socialists, they are won by the great wavering masses who do not habitually think about politics at all but who at the last moment throw their weight into one scale or the other, usually from fear. For the experience of the last five elections has shown that the electorate will always vote more enthusiastically *against* a threatened danger than *for* a promised benefit. It had voted for the Coalition in 1918 as a defence against the German and the Bolshevik menace; it had voted for the Conservatives in 1922 as a defence against the Coalition, which it then believed to have become a danger to the Empire; it had withdrawn its support from the Conservatives in 1923 as a defence against Protection, which it had been led to believe would add to the cost of living; it rallied again to the Conservatives in 1924 as a defence against Socialism, of which the principles were ruthlessly exposed to it from platforms all over the country, and it turned against them in 1929 because later on this campaign was abandoned and the

electorate was allowed to forget the potentialities of the Party it placed once more in office.

How is one to explain the paralysis that seemed to come over the Conservative Party on the morrow of their victory? Borne back to power on that wave of popular indignation against all attempts to disrupt the country and the Empire their position at this moment was impregnable.

But the Conservatives seemed afraid to follow up their advantage. To drive home the truths they had proclaimed during the election would have seemed to them "unsporting"—like trampling on a vanquished opponent in the ring. No, the Labour Party must be helped on to its feet again, its wounded feelings must be smoothed, generous tributes must be paid to its administration. Conservative ex-Ministers spoke of the inevitability of "Labour" again assuming office at some future date, intimating that once it had been purged of its "extreme" elements this prospect could be faced with equanimity. As well might the leaders of the Allied Armies after the victory of the Marne have declared that one day the Germans must break through the line and that provided Germany were purged of Junkers this would not greatly matter. The slogan of Pétain at Verdun: "Ils ne passeront pas!" inspired the troops with fresh courage because it carried with it the implication, "Ils ne passeront *jamais*."

To the electorate that had placed the Conservative Party in power there seemed no reason why Conservatism should not hold its own indefinitely and Socialism, at any rate, be relegated to the limbo of dead and forgotten things. The programme that whole-hearted Conservatives looked to the Government to carry out might perhaps be comprised in the following nine points:

1. The Campbell case to be followed up with a view to exposing the Communist plot in England.
2. Revolutionary agitation to be declared illegal.
3. A Trade Disputes Bill to be passed, freeing the workers from the anomalies of the political levy and the tyranny of the trade unions.
4. Relations with Russia to be broken off.
5. Alien immigration to be restricted.
6. The House of Lords to be reformed.
7. Safeguarding to be extended.

8. A firm line to be taken with regard to foreign policy, particularly in the matter of reparations and disarmament.
9. British interests in India, China and Egypt to be resolutely defended.

If this programme had been put into execution the Conservative Party might have made their position secure, stopped the revolutionary movement and restored peace and prosperity not only to England but to the whole civilised world.

Let us now see how the Government dealt with these nine questions during its five years' term of office.

1. *The Campbell Case*

Although the Conservatives had themselves brought a vote of censure against the "Labour" Party for dropping the prosecution of Campbell and had agreed with the Liberals to appoint a Select Committee to investigate the case, they apparently decided that it would "not be cricket" to pursue the question now that they had the upper hand. Accordingly the whole matter was dropped and Campbell was allowed to continue his activities until his arrest on other charges in October 1925.

2. *Revolutionary Agitation*

In accordance with the same cricket spirit the leaders of the Conservative Party decided that no strong measures were to be taken against Communism. The huge Conservative vote had practically constituted a mandate to the Government to put down Bolshevism with an iron hand, and nothing, it seems, would have been easier than to announce at this crisis: "We are determined to make an end of the revolutionary agitation which has held up the reconstruction of the country ever since the War. We place no bar on freedom of speech with regard to the statement of grievances, whether real or imaginary, but whoever preaches revolution shall be dealt with by the Law. Further, all persons found guilty of conspiring with the enemies of the country shall be arraigned for high treason."

Some such measure as this could surely not have failed to win the support of the great mass of the nation, and even the secret satisfaction of the Labour Party to whom the Com-

munists were a perpetual thorn in the side, urging them to carry their theories immediately into practice with the certain result of final extinction.

But nothing of the kind was done, and even alien Communists were not prevented from carrying on their intrigues. The present writer remembers hearing at the time that on the morrow of the Conservative victory hundreds of Bolshevik agents fled the country, but at the end of a few months, hearing all was well, returned triumphantly and resumed their work.

As a natural consequence of this immunity, Communism steadily increased during the first years of the Conservative Government. The C.P.G.B., that had never since its formation in 1920 exceeded—officially at least—a membership of 5,000, grew by 1926 to 10,730, and by the end of that year to 13,000—the highest figure ever recorded.

Meanwhile a number of subsidiary Communist organisations had come into being. The Workers' International Relief, the British branch of the Mejrabpom, with headquarters in Berlin, had been started in 1923, and now in January 1925 a movement akin to it, but more openly revolutionary, was inaugurated. This was the I.C.W.P.A. (International Class War Prisoners' Aid), the British branch of the Moscow organisation known as the MOPR, signifying the international association for the help of revolutionaries, on which—as the subsequent raid on Communist headquarters revealed—Moscow depended to take up the work of the C.P.G.B. in the event of the latter being declared illegal. These organisations were under the direct control of the "Komintern" (or Third International); at the same time the "Profintern" (or Red International of Labour Unions) had established a British Bureau, which in January 1924 had been transformed into the National Minority Movement with groups of members in all the leading trade unions and a weekly paper named *The Worker*.¹

By the autumn of 1925 revolutionary agitation had reached such a pitch that the Conservative Government was at last roused to action, and between October 14 and 21, 1925, the offices of the C.P.G.B., of the National Minority Movement and the Young Communist League were raided by the police. Twelve leading members of the C.P.G.B. were arrested on a charge of sedition and inciting to mutiny. These were the

¹ Details of these organisations were given in my book, *The Socialist Network* (1926).

chairman, Arthur MacManus, and Albert Inkpin, the General Secretary ; J. R. Campbell, still editor of the *Workers' Weekly*, and T. H. Wintringham, assistant editor ; William Rust and Ernest Cant, the secretary and the organiser of the Young Communist League ; Wal Hannington, National Organiser of the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement—another Communist organisation ; Tom Bell, editor of the *Communist Review* ; R. Page Arnot, secretary of the Labour Research Department ; Harry Pollitt, secretary of the National Minority Movement ; J. T. Murphy and W. Gallacher, both members of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party.

It will be seen that, with the exception of Tom Mann, the most important leaders had been rounded up. Besides occupying the above positions, MacManus, Pollitt, Murphy, Gallacher and Hannington were also members of the IKKI (Executive Committee of the Communist International) ; Gallacher being the British representative on the Præsidium of this Moscow organisation.

It might seem to the lay mind that they could have been prosecuted for high treason. Their complicity with a foreign Power that was conspiring to overthrow the Constitution of the country was proved at their trial on November 25 ; the sums of money they had received from Moscow—£14,000 within a few months—were shown in their books seized at headquarters. But apparently no law existed by which they could be charged with more than "conspiracy to publish seditious libels and to incite people to induce soldiers and sailors to break their oaths of allegiance." The first five—Inkpin, Rust, Pollitt, Gallacher and Hannington—were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, but, said the judge, addressing what he had described as these "nice-looking young men" : "Because you are not of the ordinary criminal classes you shall not be dealt with in the ordinary way, but put in the second division."

The remaining seven were then asked whether they would promise to be of good behaviour in the future, and on their declining to be bound over, they were sentenced to six months' imprisonment, also in the second division.

Needless to say, the Labour Party had opposed the prosecution, the case for the defence being conducted by Sir Henry Slessor, whilst amongst sureties for bail during the trial were Mr. Bernard Shaw, Lady Warwick, Miss Susan Lawrence, Mr. H. N. Brailsford and Colonel Wedgwood, M.P.

The action taken by the Government had no doubt produced some effect, but it could have been rendered more effectual if the offices of the other subsidiary Communist organisations and of district committees had been raided at the same time as those of the C.P.G.B., National Minority Movement and Young Communist League. All these organisations might then have been declared illegal and suppressed, the avowed affiliation of the C.P.G.B. with the Third International, of the National Minority Movement with the Profintern, and of the I.C.W.P.A. with the MOPR, having been proved beyond dispute. But nothing of the kind was done. The C.P.G.B. was declared illegal but not suppressed, and the Communists continued their activities with unabated ardour.

Moreover, the information that fell into the hands of the authorities on the occasion of these raids was made of very little use in enlightening the public on the Communist danger. The literature seized was confiscated by the police and kept for their own edification throughout the ensuing eight months, whilst anti-Communist organisations and groups were not allowed to have a glimpse of the contents. Throughout this period these loyal organisations were deprived of their habitual sources of information—more necessary than ever at this moment in view of the general strike threatened for May 1926—for even the published literature of the Communist Party was unobtainable, the shelves of its bookshop having been swept almost bare by the police.

Such a course would have been more comprehensible if the confiscated literature had been kept back with a view to bringing out a really well-documented report on Communist activities. But when at last on June 22, 1926, after the general strike had taken place, the long-awaited Government Blue Book, *Communist Papers* (Cmd. 2682) appeared, the result was somewhat of an anti-climax. A great part of the correspondence published consisted of Marxist theory which could be found in any Bolshevik handbook, and though a certain number of interesting letters were included, the official comments in the form of a glossary at the end contained a number of inaccuracies which suggested that the compilers' acquaintance with the world-revolutionary movement was of the slightest, and one was inevitably led to question how far investigators, so unfamiliar with their subject, were able to appreciate the significance of the evidence placed at their disposal and to select the most important documents for publication. Information of this highly technical nature

should surely have been entrusted to a committee of experts, versed in all the intricacies of the world revolutionary machine, and not to Government officials trained merely for the task of criminal investigation.

Whilst these events were taking place, Bolshevik influences in the trade unions were growing in strength.

In the autumn of 1924, just after the fall of the Labour Government, a Delegation of Trade Unionists had set forth for Russia in accordance with the project formed at the Hull Congress of the T.U.C. at which Tomskey, Ammosoff, Korbacheff, Lepse, Jarocksky and Andrew Rothstein had been present as Soviet delegates. The idea was at first to send the British Delegation to Russia in order to investigate conditions in that country, but a further purpose was later proposed by Zinoviev, namely that the Delegation should make inquiries with regard to the authenticity of the famous letter attributed to him.

Obedient as usual to the dictates of Moscow, the representatives of the British T.U.C. pursued these inquiries on their arrival in Russia, with the scarcely surprising result that the letter was pronounced to be a forgery, not a trace of it having been discovered in the Soviet archives !

The Delegation, which left London on November 7 and returned on December 19, 1924, consisted of A. A. Purcell (one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain), Herbert Smith (who had been in favour of admitting the Communists to the Labour Party at the Brighton Conference of the Labour Party in 1921), John Bromley (who had said in 1920 that he was "for revolution which would remove capitalism at all costs"), Ben Tillett (who had declared in the Albert Hall that he was a revolutionary Socialist), Fred Bramley (who had advocated starving out the capitalists in the event of a general strike), also A. A. H. Findlay and John Turner, who played a minor rôle. It will be seen that these were hardly delegates who could be depended on to form an unbiased opinion of the Bolshevik experiment, and their report on conditions prevailing in the Soviet Paradise was characterised by the Austrian Social Democrat, Dr. Adler, as "a masterpiece of Bolshevik argument." Their speeches during their stay in Moscow clearly showed that it was as the admirers, not as the critics, of the Bolsheviks that they went to Russia. From the point of view of an inquiry their visit was a farce. Each member of the Delegation contributed an autograph message to the Soviet Government organ,

Izvestia, on November 12, 1924. The message of Purcell, chairman of the Delegation, ran :

Soviet Russia is the first bright jewel in the world's working-class crown.

And in an interview with *Pravda* (organ of the Russian Communist Party) he declared :

Comrades, you have carried through a mighty work. . . . May all live to see changes such as these in England !

Bromley, as reported by the same paper, stated in Moscow :

Neither MacDonald nor Snowden nor Shaw has ever been representative of the British workers. . . . Through the trade unions we are the real representatives of the British workers, and we declare that we support the Soviet Government.

Tillett in his autograph message to *Izvestia* wrote :

Soviet Russia is the hope of the world's workers.

In a speech delivered on November 12 he said :

Allow me to pay my respects to the memory of one of the greatest men in the world—the memory of our late comrade Lenin. . . . The workers have never lost from revolution. . . . I am proud to be present at your congress. . . . You did so much for the world, you who have created a miracle of miracles. . . . Our movement . . . is beginning to acknowledge the necessity not only of Parliamentary but also of a non-Parliamentary struggle. . . . I do want to call you friends, because this is a solemn moment.

Herbert Smith, however, after congratulating the Russian workers on the "comradely spirit" existing amongst them, expressed some disillusionment on his return. His visit to Russia, he said at Ecclesfield on September 28, 1925, had convinced him that revolution was wrong.

The visit of the British delegates, nevertheless, cemented the friendship between the trade unionists of Great Britain and Russia. As a result, the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee was set up, and in April 1925 a group of Russian delegates, led by Tomskey, arrived in England for a joint conference.

Tomskey was again present at the Scarborough Conference of the T.U.C. in September, where he was presented with a gold watch, and resolutions were put forward in favour of

the " One Big Union " and the break-up of the British Empire, which latter was carried by a huge majority.

Such were the activities carried on throughout the country whilst Conservatives continued to repeat the soothing phrase : " The British working-man is not a revolutionary. There is no danger of Bolshevism here." Of course the British working-man is not a revolutionary, nor was the working-man of France in 1794 when a report of the Paris police stated : " The people are good and judge sanely as long as they are not misled by agitators." The business of Government is to see that agitators should not be given a free hand to lead the worker into courses to which he is not by nature prone.

3. *The Trade Disputes Act*

It was with a view to protecting the workers from this form of tyranny that, soon after the advent of the Conservative Government to power, several members of the Party urged the introduction of the measures contained in the " Macquisten Bill." Since the Political Levy Act of 1913 all trade unionists had been compelled to subscribe to the political fund raised by their union for the coffers of the Labour Party, unless they secured exemption by the process known as " contracting out," involving no little difficulty and loss of favour with the trade-union leaders. That working-men who held Conservative or Liberal views should be morally obliged to support a Party with whose principles they disagreed, was so obviously unfair that a movement was set on foot by a number of Conservatives to bring in a law by which trade unionists should " contract in " if they wished to subscribe to the political levy, instead of " contracting out " in order to avoid payment. The Government having given no lead in the matter, a private member, Mr. Macquisten, put forward a Bill to this effect on March 6, 1925. Mr. Baldwin, however, fearing to disturb industrial relations, moved an amendment approving the principle of political liberty embodied in the Macquisten Bill, but expressing the opinion that a measure of such far-reaching importance should not be introduced as a Private Member's Bill. It was on this occasion that the Prime Minister delivered his famous " Peace in our time " speech, of which the following are the salient passages :

We believe in the justice of this Bill, but we are not going to push home our political advantage at a time like this. We, at any rate, are not going to fire the first shot.

We stand for Peace and to remove suspicion in the country.

We want to create a new atmosphere in the new Parliament for a new age in which the people can come together.

We abandon what we have laid our hands to.

We know we may be called cowards for doing it.

We know we may be told we have gone back on our principles, but we believe at this moment we know what the country wants, and we believe it is for us in our strength to do what no other can do at this moment and say we, at any rate, stand for Peace. I am confident as I stand here that that will be the feeling of all those who sit behind me and that they will accept the amendment which I have put down in the spirit in which I have moved it.

I have equal confidence in my fellow countrymen throughout the whole of Great Britain, and while I know there are those who work for different ends from most of us in this House, I know there are many in all ranks and in all Parties who will re-echo my prayer : " Give peace in our time, O Lord ! "

It was an appeal that addressed to sincere and generous-minded men could not have failed to win a response ; unhappily the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, which represent a counsel of perfection for human nature on a higher plane than it has yet attained, are fraught with danger when applied to present-day political strife. Deep disappointment ran through the ranks of the Conservative realists at the sight of their leader abandoning the strategic position they had striven so hard to gain. This magnanimous gesture, they well knew, would be lost on their opponents. The *Daily Herald*, in reference to it, observed that Mr. Baldwin's speeches were " so much hot air,"¹ and although certain of the " Labour " leaders expressed appreciation—Mr. Bromley spoke feelingly of the Prime Minister's " great human speech "—they did not allow it to influence their actions. The direct reply to Mr. Baldwin's appeal for peace was the general strike, for which preparations were now carried out with unabated ardour.

This climax, to which all revolutionary agitation since the ending of the War had been leading up, embodied the old dream of the Syndicalists, the " Grand Soir," when by simultaneous action on the part of all the workers the whole machinery of State would be arrested and " Capitalism " brought crashing to the ground. In the old days Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, as a State Socialist, had opposed this anarchist conception of the way in which the new world was to be

¹ Date of March 23, 1925.

inaugurated, and no one had described more forcibly than he had done in his small book, *Syndicalism*, the misery such an event must bring upon the workers. But now, as a means for countering the recent victory of the Conservative Party, all minor differences were sunk and Socialists, Syndicalists, Pacifists and Communists stood shoulder to shoulder in preparing the great onslaught on the existing social system which was planned to take place the following summer.

The pretext was the termination of the wage agreement made by the colliery owners with the miners in June 1924, under the "Labour" Government, which was due to expire at midnight on July 31, 1925. During January of that year Mr. A. J. Cook, secretary of the Miners' Federation, was rattling the sabre and declaring: "We are in for a battle. Black Friday can never happen again."¹ In June he proclaimed that: "It is nearly ready. . . . Oh, if they only knew! There would be some trembling at the knees!"²

As usual, it was left to the so-called "Extremists" to incur all the odium of stirring up revolution by their violence, whilst the so-called "Moderates" remained discreetly in the background, publicly disavowing such utterances but tacitly lending their support to the movement. When the crucial moment arrived, the signatures to the instructions issued to the railway and transport unions to refuse to handle coal included those of Mr. J. H. Thomas and of Mr. Bromley, whose appreciation of the Prime Minister's "great human" appeal for peace did not prevent him from taking the necessary steps to disturb it.

But at the last moment Mr. Baldwin disappointed the revolutionaries on the one hand and his own supporters on the other by granting the mines a subsidy of £20,000,000 to maintain the present rate of wages until April 30, 1926. The revolutionaries, who had hoped to bring about the downfall of Capitalism on August 1, were therefore obliged to restrain their impatience for another nine months, whilst the stalwarts in the opposing camp who had desired to see a fight to a finish felt that this was only putting off the evil day at a very heavy price. As the Conservatives *Election Notes for Speakers* (p. 83) points out: "This subsidy eventually cost the people of Great Britain £23,000,000"—and it did not avert the crisis.

¹ Speech at Cannock, January 11, 1925. "Black Friday" was the day when the general strike was called off four years earlier—April 15, 1921. See *ante*, p. 118.

² Speech at Walsall, June 14, 1925.

From this moment preparations for "the day" went forward in both camps. In August 1925 Mr. Cook rattled his sabre more loudly than ever—"He wanted a revolution that would mean that they would have not only a disciplined organisation but one with an objective before it"; in September, "We are hatching something they will fear"; in February 1926, "We are leaving nothing to chance. Some of us are working day and night preparing the machine."¹

As usual the Communists—for at this date Mr. Cook, though not avowedly a member of the C.P.G.B., was the idol of the Communist Press—rendered the greatest services to the constitutional cause. Every gust of hot air from Mr. Cook's platform wafted a cheque into the funds of anti-Socialist organisations. His incendiary phrases provided the finest copy for the Conservative Press. The British are a bad nation to threaten, and threats of violence helped to stiffen resistance to the Communist plan of action.

When in October 1925 the O.M.S. (Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies), under the inspiration of the late General Sir Francis Lloyd, came out with its appeal to ensure the food supplies of the nation in the event of a general strike, the response was overwhelming—less from the rich and leisured classes, who still lulled themselves with "the-British-working-man-is-not-a-revolutionary" refrain, than from the professional and also from the manual workers who, brought face to face in their daily life with realities, were better able to grasp the potentialities of the situation. And, as at the time of the Die-Hard Appeal, obscure patriots all over the country—from retired colonels or their widows and daughters to working miners and stout-hearted "daily helps"—rallied to the call and wrote to offer their services. The heart of the people was seen to be as sound as ever.

The date on which the coal subsidy was to expire had been fixed as April 30, thus providing that the threatened explosion should take place on May 1—International Labour Day—which since 1889 had always been made the occasion for revolutionary demonstrations. A conference of the T.U.C. was arranged to take place at noon on this date, and the decision was reached by an overwhelming majority (3,653,529 to 49,911) to declare a general strike at midnight on May 3, provided no settlement were reached in the meantime. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who was present on this occasion, met with tremendous applause, and in addressing the meeting

¹ Speeches at Pontypridd, Islington and Bargoed.

expressed his belief that "something would happen" to avert the crisis, "if not, we are in the battle with you." The proceedings ended with the singing of the "Red Flag," in which Mr. MacDonald "joined lustily."¹

Of course the usual declarations of "a desire for peace" were forthcoming from Labour and trade union leaders alike during the forty-eight hours that followed—according to the time-honoured custom of revolution described as long ago as 1857 by the German writer Eckert. I cannot refrain from quoting what I wrote in this connection five years before the general strike took place :

Every time a revolutionary strike is now threatened . . . the so-called moderate Labour leaders, whilst disassociating themselves from the actual preparation of revolution, give it all the support in their power by representing the Extremists as "hot-headed" enthusiasts whom it is impossible to restrain but whose cause nevertheless is just. The public, always deceived by this manoeuvre, falls on the necks of the "moderates," trusting to them to save the situation and bring the hot-heads to reason, the truth being that the very moderation of the former immensely aids the work of revolution by reconciling those who would be alienated by the violence of the Extremists.²

This is exactly what happened in 1926. The Press of May 2 touchingly related that Mr. Thomas was "striving for peace"—but so was Mr. Cook also ! Nevertheless, according to Mr. Cook, Mr. Thomas said to him just after they left Downing Street on that fateful night of May 2 : "We must now, Cook, fight for our lives."³ Nine days later, when the strike had proved a failure, Mr. Thomas declared at Hammersmith : "I have never disguised and I do not disguise that I have never been favour of the general strike."⁴

Who then was in favour of it except the small body of avowed Communists who had been officially disavowed by the trade unions ? At any rate it happened, and the Labour leaders gave it all the support in their power.

On May 3 the printers refused to print the *Daily Mail* owing to a patriotic article entitled "For King and Country," and when on the following day Mr. George Isaacs, General Secretary of Natsopa (National Society of Operative Printers

¹ *Weekly Dispatch*, May 2, 1926.

² *World Revolution*, published in 1921, p. 321.

³ *The Nine Days*, by A. J. Cook, p. 13.

⁴ *British Gazette*, May 11, 1926.

and Assistants), issued the order to all printers to cease work, in other words to close down the whole constitutional Press, the revolutionary situation was complete. Six years earlier a Russian who had lived through the Bolshevik Revolution, said to the present writer: "The first thing the revolutionaries will do, when the time comes, is to close down your Press. You ought to be training compositors now." But no such precaution had been taken. The *British Gazette* was hastily inaugurated and produced as by a miracle on May 5. At the same time the General Council of the T.U.C. started its organ, the *British Worker*—the only paper trade unionists were allowed to handle. Thus under "Labour" rule all contrary opinion was to be suppressed and the revolutionary minority, as in Russia, were to exercise an absolute dictatorship over the country.

The cool proposal that the T.U.C. should be entrusted with the distribution of food supplies was mercifully turned down by the Government. That it should have been made was evidence of the ignorance attributed to Conservative statesmen by the trade union leaders. It was presumed that they knew nothing of the project around which the general strike centres, namely to starve the Government and "bourgeoisie" into submission to the dictates of the strikers according to the plan admitted by Bramley in the words "we were not going to cut off our own supplies." Whether aware of this design or not, the Government perceived the impossibility of trusting the food supply of the country to the men who had called the strike, and set up a magnificent organisation for the provisioning of London by means of a food "pool" in Hyde Park, whence supplies were carried by transport in charge of volunteers to all parts of the city. Nevertheless, we were obliged to endure the humiliation of seeing vans bringing food to our doors plastered with the notice: "By permission of the T.U.C." So that apparently it was only by the good pleasure of a handful of trade union leaders that the nation was allowed to live!

Undoubtedly the situation was admirably handled by the Government, but it was the spirit of the people that won the day. The heads of the T.U.C. had counted on intimidating Cabinet Ministers, but they reckoned without the force of public opinion. The young men who drove the buses, ran the trains, trundled luggage, rolled milk-cans; the young women who acted as cooks and chauffeurs; indeed the men and women of all ages who came forward and did their bit in the

country's hour of need, were the real victors, and the gaiety with which they carried out their tasks did even more than their courage to win the day. Mr. Baldwin declared it to have been a victory for common sense; it was still more a victory for a sense of humour. The great British revolution, heralded with so many solemn threats, had ended in a burlesque.

Yet beneath its surface gaiety the general strike of May 1926 was one of the most serious events in the history of the country. It had demonstrated the fact that though "the British working-man is not a revolutionary," he can be stampeded into a revolutionary course out of a sense of loyalty to revolutionary leaders; it had further demonstrated the complete subservience of the so-called "Moderates" to the "Extremists" at times of crisis, and had thus provided a warning as to what might happen if a general strike were to occur when these same "Moderates" held the reins of government. As Mr. George Lansbury afterwards observed: "Had a Socialist Government been in power the whole forces of the State would have been used to fling off the backs of the people the most greedy, incompetent and brutal set of monopolists this land had ever been cursed with and to take back land and minerals," etc.¹ Mr. Ben Turner declared that "the Great Strike was a great success,"² and that "if another general strike occurs the workers must have time to prepare for it and must have schemes in readiness for meeting critical emergencies."³

It would be a mistake, however to treat bravado of this kind too seriously. After their defeat, the only course for the "Labour" leaders was to bluff it out and justify themselves in the eyes of their deluded followers. But the weapon of the general strike, if not broken, had been badly blunted and could not be used again for some time to come. All this was to the good, the nine days of May had cleared the air and the Government had emerged from the situation with flying colours.

Yet whilst recognising the efficiency with which the general strike was countered, one is inevitably led to ask: "Should it have occurred at all?" It cost the country in the end £80,000,000 and lost markets that have never been recovered. If only the Macquisten Bill had not been turned down; if, better still, the Conservative Government, whilst on the crest of the wave after its victory at the polls in October 1924, had itself brought in a Bill on the lines suggested earlier

¹ Speech at Thaxted, reported in *Eastern Daily Press*, May 25, 1926. -

² *Forward*, May 29, 1926.

³ *Sunday Worker*, June 6, 1926.

in this chapter, limiting the powers of the trade unions and suppressing seditious agitations; if, again, the Astbury Judgment of May 11, 1926, declaring the general strike illegal, had been delivered whilst this revolutionary scheme was still in contemplation, what loss of trade, of wealth and of prosperity might have been avoided!

But it was not until a year later, after irreparable damage had been done, that the Government at last decided to bring in the Trade Disputes Bill by which: (1) a general strike or lock-out was made illegal; (2) intimidation was made illegal; (3) no person should be compelled to subscribe to the funds of a political party unless he so desired; and (4) Civil Servants should owe undivided allegiance to the State.

The Bill was moved on April 4, 1927, passed its second reading on May 2 and became law in the following July.

Needless to say, the Labour Party launched a violent campaign against what it was pleased to term the "Anti-Trade Union Bill," which limited the tyranny they exercised over the organised workers and deprived their funds of subscriptions to which they had no moral right. In reality nothing fairer could be imagined, and the only cause for indignation was that such glaring injustices should not have been removed before. As the Attorney-General, Sir Douglas Hogg (now Lord Hailsham), explained:

Any member of a Trade Union who desires to subscribe to the political funds for the furtherance of Socialism through the machinery of his Trade Union is at liberty to do so.

What the Act does is to ensure that only those Trade Unionists who do wish to subscribe money to the Socialist Party shall be liable to contribute, and that the thousands of Conservative and Liberal working-men can belong to the Trade Unions appropriate to their industries without incurring any liability to pay money for the support of political doctrines which they detest and believe to be fatal to the true interests of the nation.¹

How readily the workers responded to this measure for their liberation was shown by the large decline in subscriptions to Labour Party funds; according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the Party's income declined by about 50 per cent.² The Communists proposed a general strike in protest, but the Labour Party contented themselves with declaring that they would repeal the Bill as soon as they came into office again.

¹ Interview in *Morning Post*, August 1, 1927.

² *Election Notes for Conservative Speakers*, p. 97.

4. *Relations with Russia*

"The Conservative Government," remarks the Conservative Central Office Handbook of 1929, in its section on the break with Russia, "had displayed extraordinary patience in face of the never-ceasing campaign by the Soviet to foment trouble in this country and to create difficulties for Britain in other parts of the world. It had repeatedly warned the Soviet Government that, although the British Government desired to avoid a rupture, the continuance of such provocative actions must sooner or later make a break inevitable."¹

For the lay mind it is difficult to understand why this prolonged patience should have been exercised. The nation had clearly signified its *impatience* by returning the Conservative Party to power mainly on the issue of Bolshevik intrigue, and the natural corollary to the Zinoviev letter would surely have been an instant rupture with the Soviet Government. But this course of action was strongly opposed by Sir Austen Chamberlain, now Foreign Secretary, and his supporters in the House of Commons. The curious argument was advanced, as it had been in the case of Communist agitation, that to suppress Bolshevik propaganda would be "to drive it underground." The precise meaning of this phrase is not clear. Because a movement is allowed to flourish in the open, this does not preclude underground activities any more than the building up of a house prevents the existence of cellars. The Communist Party of Great Britain, allowed a free hand from the beginning, had always had what were known officially as its "underground members," and its more important activities were naturally of the subterranean kind. Bolshevik intrigue in this country had been carried on by the same methods, and to suppress open propaganda would surely not have been to increase its danger but to render it to a large extent abortive.

Again it was urged that a rupture with the Soviet Government would damage trade. But such apprehensions were afterwards seen to be unfounded. For as the Central Office Handbook points out: "It has been alleged that the break with Russia has adversely affected trade with that country. But no embargo was placed on trade with Russia. . . . Trade with Russia—both import and export—was actually higher in 1927 than it was under the Socialist Government."² From

¹ *Election Notes for Conservative Speakers*, p. 324.

² *Ibid.*, p. 325.

the trade point of view alone it seems therefore regrettable that the break did not occur earlier, whilst as far as the political situation was concerned, nothing but harm resulted from the continued presence of the Bolsheviks in the country. Such was the forbearance shown to Russia that when in May 1926 the Soviet Government proposed to send £100,000 to the T.U.C. in aid of the general strike, the British Government contented itself with declining to allow the money to be paid over, and even permitted funds to be supplied to the miners from Russia. But no protest was entered against the action of the Soviet Government as a violation of the Trade Agreement. In December of the same year Mr. Cook visited Moscow in person and, in an address to the Trades Union Congress in that city, was reported by the Moscow Press as saying :

We need your help, we need your experience and we need the teachings of Marx and Lenin so that we may find a way out of the difficulties experienced now in Great Britain. . . . We must have the means and we must have ammunition.

To which Rykoff (Chief Commissar), Voroshilov (Commissar for War) and Bukharin of the Polit-Bureau responded with assurances of sympathy and support. Voroshilov emphasised the necessity of increasing the manufacture of war materials. Rykoff observed : " The chief reason for the defeat of the British miners was the treachery of the leaders of moderation. . . . The part played by the Soviet Unions and the whole population of the U.S.S.R. must be enhanced." ¹

Then at last in February 1927 the British Government issued a final warning, the sixth, in the form of a Note from Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Soviet Government. As usual the Bolsheviks fell back on their dual-personality excuse. Their official organ, *Izvestia*, observed :

With regard to the charges against politicians of the Soviet Union of calling for a world revolution and against Bukharin and Voroshilov of making statements abusing Great Britain, the Soviet Government has never given an undertaking to anybody to prevent Russian citizens, whether private persons or members of the Government, from voicing in speeches a firm belief in an inevitable world revolution when such utterances are made on Soviet territory.

Even the patience of the Conservative Government was now exhausted, and when in the spring of this year a confidential document, found to be missing from the War Office, was

¹ *Daily Mail*, December 14, 1926.

traced to "Arcos," it was decided to make a surprise raid on the building.

This organisation had now grown into a vast octopus of Bolshevist activity. Besides the headquarters, "Soviet House," at 49, Moorgate Street, acquired at a cost of nearly £300,000, occupying six floors and housing not only the Trade Delegation, with its large staff and thirty-eight departments, but the Bank for Russian Trade, Arcos also controlled a timber agency at 153, Moorgate Street, a Steamship Enquiries Company (distributing W.I.R. propaganda) in Mason's Avenue, an Information Department at 68, Lincoln's Inn Fields, etc. Besides these there were the Centrosoyus (Central Union of Consumers' Societies) at 46, South Buildings, Holborn, the Centrosoyus Press in Camberwell, the Moscow Narodny Bank and two Russian bookshops for the circulation of Bolshevist literature. In 1923 a branch of the Cheka (now known as the G.P.U. or in this country as the OGPU) had been established in London by order of Dzerjinsky with an income of £10,000 a year.

Moscow was thus well equipped for the task of disrupting Great Britain, and a simultaneous raid on these various organisations might have led to still more interesting discoveries. The Government, however, decided to confine its attention to the headquarters of Arcos, and at 4.30 in the afternoon of May 12, 1927, a large force of police surrounded "Soviet House" and at a given signal burst into the building. A thorough search was then made throughout every department and although the missing document was not discovered, this did not prove, as the Socialists declared, that the authorities had acted on false information, since the cipher clerk, Anton Miller, was surprised in the very act of burning papers, and others were disposed of in more ingenious ways. At any rate, the search revealed the manner in which the Soviet Trade Delegation had been used as a cover for Bolshevist intrigue, for correspondence was discovered with Communists and revolutionary trade union organisations in this country, for agitation against the Trade Disputes Bill and for complicity in the outbreak that had taken place in China by means of the "Hands Off China" Movement. The documents seized provided further evidence of the continued violation of the Trade Agreement by the Soviet Government in the relations between Peking and Moscow. Although Rosengoltz, the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, had declared that Jacob Borodin, alias Michael Grusenbergh, the chief author

of the troubles in that city, was "a private individual who is not and never has been in the service of the Soviet Government," and Litvinov had maintained that "the Soviet Government had no kind of connection with him or responsibility for him," a telegram was now brought to light from the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet representative in Peking, dated November 12, 1926, in which it was stated that "Comrade Borodin is to take his orders direct from Moscow."

An overwhelming case against the Soviet Government had now been made out, which was afterwards published in a White Paper (Cmd. 2874), "Documents illustrating the Hostile Activities of the Soviet Government and Third International against Great Britain," and on May 24 the Government decided to terminate the Trade Agreement and to sever diplomatic relations with Russia. The Socialists, of course, violently opposed this measure, which was passed, however, by a majority of 357 votes to 111. A Note was accordingly addressed by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, to Mr. Rosengoltz, breaking off relations, and on June 3 the representatives of the Soviet Government left the country. Before their departure a farewell luncheon party was given in their honour by their sorrowing friends in the Labour Party at the House of Commons, at which the Labour members present included Mr. Lansbury, Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Mr. Maxton, Mr. George Hicks and Mr. Ben Tillett.

When the day of departure finally arrived a great demonstration took place on the platform at Victoria. Messrs. Rosengoltz and Khinchuk, driving up in their magnificent Rolls-Royce decorated with the sickle and the hammer, found both Socialists and Communists assembled to speed the parting guests. Mr. Rosengoltz received a hearty greeting from Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Lansbury was kissed on both cheeks by Mr. Meisky, whilst Mr. Saklatvala hovered round armed with red poppies. As the train drew out of the station the "Red Flag" and the "Internationale" were sung by both groups at the same time with painful effect. The episode offered further evidence of the fact that when it comes to taking action the Labour Party's line of conduct is always indistinguishable from the Communists'.

How in the face of the unceasing insults hurled at the Labour Party by the Soviet Government and Press, the friendship between the two can be maintained no one has ever yet been able to explain. Mr. Baldwin asked the question when the plan for renewing relations with Russia was

debated in the House on November 5, 1929, "What is the secret of the affection which the Party opposite hold for the Government of Russia? The Russian Government have called the Labour Party by every name they can lay their tongue to." To this inquiry no reply was forthcoming and the secret remains undivulged. Yet perhaps the bond between them may be found in the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels.¹ It would surely be difficult for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to feel harshly towards a Government that has set up the kindly image of "Daddy Marx" beside that of "Uncle Lenin" in all the shrines of Russia.

England, however, heaved a sigh of relief at the departure of the Bolsheviks. The Government in taking this firm action had immensely enhanced its reputation both at home and abroad. The present writer was in Paris at the time, and can testify to the admiration the Arcos raid evoked amongst foreigners of all races. Great Britain, it was said, had given a lead to the world in ridding herself of the Bolshevik microbe; other countries must follow suit and demand a rupture of diplomatic relations.

As time went on, however, it appeared that the cleaning-out process had not been completed by the Arcos raid. Although the building in Moorgate Street was put up for sale and disposed of by the Soviet Trade Delegation, "Arcos" as a company still remained with a reduced staff, occupying offices in a street off Liverpool Street. Moreover, in the following spring of 1928 it transpired that the Communist Movement in this country was still being financed through the channel of the two Russian banks in London. This discovery followed on the arrest of some Irish gunmen in March, one of whom was found in possession of banknotes which were traced to the Bank for Russian Trade in Moorgate Street. According to the *Pravda* a group of ten Irish revolutionaries, together with several English delegates under the leadership of Mr. Will Lawther—now "Labour" Member for Barnard Castle—had visited Moscow in the previous January, and one of the Irish group had stated:

Our country has to fight against England exactly like yours. Irish sympathies are with you, and we hope that the next Soviet Republic will be in Ireland.²

The close connection between Moscow and the revolutionaries in Great Britain was therefore once again established,

¹ See *ante*, p. 181.

² *Daily Mail*, April 21, 1928.

and an inquiry was set on foot by the Government into the transactions of the Bank for Russian Trade and of the Moscow Narodny Bank at Lincoln House, 300, High Holborn. The result of this was to show that funds had passed through both these banks into the possession of revolutionaries in this country. Of course the chairman of the latter bank, Mr. M. Zembluchter, categorically denied any responsibility, "neither the Board nor any of the Directors knew anything of these matters"—one seems to have heard the phrase before in connection with the relations between Moscow and the Communists of Great Britain. At any rate, the source of these funds was proved beyond doubt, and there seemed again this time to be no reason why the men found in possession of this Russian money for financing revolution should not be brought to justice and a final round-up of Communists carried out all over the country. That this was not done is a mystery that has never been explained.

It must be remembered, however, that the attitude of the Government with regard to Soviet intrigue was weakened by criticism from constitutional quarters. The Beaverbrook Press—in sharp contrast to the organs of Lord Rothermere, which had carried on an unrelenting "Out with the Reds" campaign—had from the first disapproved of the Arcos raid, and from that date never ceased to demand the renewal of relations with Russia. But defections within the Conservative Party itself did more serious damage to Party unity on this question. The Report issued by the four "Young Conservatives" who made a journey to Moscow in May 1926 was distinctly favourable to a further diplomatic and commercial agreement with Russia though critical of the Soviet regime. The tendency of this Report and of the Trade Delegation, composed of business men who went to Russia in 1928, was to put the Government in the wrong for having broken off relations with that country, and to deprive the Conservative Party of one of its strongest lines of propaganda at the ensuing elections.

It is impossible to avoid the reflection that in their handling of the Bolshevik question the Conservative Party missed a great opportunity. If they had only maintained a united front, if they had pursued their investigations further on more scientific lines and in conjunction with foreign Powers threatened by the same danger, it is possible that the whole Bolshevik conspiracy might have been laid bare and the revolutionary movement that for nine years had held the world in torment have been finally defeated.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONSERVATIVE DEBACLE

It has been seen that the Conservative Government, whilst displaying "extraordinary patience" in dealing with the Communist menace, had nevertheless by breaking off relations with Soviet Russia and passing the Trade Disputes Bill, fulfilled to some extent the first part of the programme outlined at the beginning of the preceding chapter. In the matter of further legislation relating to Home policy, the writer who desires to make the best of the Government record from the purely Conservative point of view, finds the difficulty of the task increased by the absence of official statements on the subject. For, whilst the manifestos of the Labour Party boldly proclaim how Socialistic their policy has been throughout, the literature of the Conservative Party seems mainly designed to show how carefully they have avoided being "reactionary," and is therefore more calculated to placate Socialists than to hearten Conservatives. Throughout the ten pages devoted to a summary of the Government's record from 1924-9 at the beginning of its *Election Notes for Speakers*, one looks in vain for more than a few lines relating to measures that can be described as distinctively Conservative. With regard to the fifth point of the aforesaid programme, one finds, for example, nothing at all.

5. *Alien Immigration*

The part played by alien agitators in all the troubles of the country since the War and the light thrown on their activities by the arrest of the Communists in 1925, the Arcos raid in 1927 and the affair of the Russian banks in 1928, had focused public attention more than ever on the alien danger. And besides the agents of Moscow and other "undesirable aliens" there were the thousands of foreigners to be considered who yearly landed on these shores in search of work. There was

no question on which a large body of Conservatives felt more strongly than on this. Of what use was it merely to keep out foreign goods by means of Safeguarding, if foreign workers were to be allowed to pour into the country and render both the unemployment and the housing problems still more acute?

The policy of the "Labour" Party—so curiously incompatible with trade union opposition to "dilution" by British workers—had always been, like that of the Liberals, to relax the restrictions on immigration to the furthest possible extent. The working-men, however, felt differently, and it was presumably owing to the pressure of working-class opinion that the Labour Party when in office during 1924 took a firmer line in this respect than might have been expected from their former utterances. Thus, when a deputation from the Board of Deputies of British Jews called on the Home Secretary (Mr. Henderson) to remonstrate about the restrictions on aliens, they met with little satisfaction, and Mr. Henderson's policy was characterised by the Jewish Press as "ridiculous and unworthy."¹ Again in the House of Commons when Mr. (now Lord) Bridgeman urged that aliens should not be permitted to displace British workers, the Home Secretary had the courage to agree that in view of the present state of unemployment "not even a Labour Home Secretary could be anxious to admit aliens to this country if they were going to compete for positions that ought to be open to the million workers of our own country who were still unemployed."²

Aliens who landed in this country (excluding transmigrants) during the year 1924 still, however, numbered 388,129—a rise of 66,256 over the previous year—and it was hoped that as soon as a Conservative Government was again returned to power regulations on immigration would be tightened up further. There was every reason to believe that when Sir William Joynson-Hicks (now Lord Brentford) was appointed to the Home Office after the Conservative victory in 1924, he would carry out this policy. In the Debate on Aliens that had taken place in the House on May 5, 1924, he had taunted the Labour Party with being "pro-aliens" and declared that "the Conservative Party were prepared to go forward and give more rights to the Britisher as against the alien." (Opposition cheers.) Two months later, in a letter to the present writer which he sent at the same time to the Press for publication, Lord Brentford expressed himself as strongly in favour of a "Britain for British" policy.

¹ *Jewish World*, May 15, 1924.

² *Ibid.*, May 22, 1924.

In my view [he wrote], for many years past we have unnecessarily permitted ourselves to be the dust-heap of a great deal of foreign humanity which would much better remain in its own country. We are short here of work, we are short here of houses, and the foreign elements undoubtedly contribute to the lowering of the wage standard and to the overcrowding in alien working-class districts. . . . I hope that when the Conservative Party is returned to power in the near future it will strengthen the existing law in regard to the importation and the subsequent deportation of undesirable aliens.¹

This hope was echoed by every patriot, and on the accession of a Conservative Government to office in the following autumn, a deputation from the National Citizens' Union—headed by Colonel Lane, whose work with regard to this question has been unremitting throughout the past twelve years—urged Sir William Joynson-Hicks to carry out a "tightening-up policy."²

This was followed in February 1925 by the inevitable deputation from the Jewish Board of Deputies to urge the contrary course and to relax restrictions. Sir William, however, held his ground, and pointed out that "the entry of an alien was a privilege, not a right, and we were entitled to make any condition we liked for the exercise of that privilege."³ The *Jewish World* angrily disputed this contention, declaring that the powers the Home Secretary was exercising were "unconstitutional and illegal" and that he was putting them into force "by sheer brute power, the very acme of unrighteousness. . . . It is this abominable system that Sir William Joynson-Hicks defends and seems to gloat over, and which he has the temerity to assert is in the interests of the country. . . . It never entered the mind of the Home Secretary that he is *the servant of the alien* [my italics] as of all subjects of His Majesty, or that, as such, the alien in this country at least has distinct rights and privileges."⁴

As to those aliens whom Lord Brentford had described as guilty of illegal or immoral practices, the *Jewish World* observed: "Why should aliens be punished for immorality and *natives* be allowed to indulge in it with impunity?"⁵

The natives, however, were still determined to put up some

¹ Letter from Sir William Joynson-Hicks to Mrs. Webster published in *The Times* and *Morning Post* of July 3, 1924.

² See *The Alien Menace: A Statement of the Case*, by Lieut.-Colonel A. H. Lane (St. Stephen's Publishing Company).

³ *Evening Standard*, February 6, 1925.

⁴ Date of February 12, 1925.

resistance, and in October 1925 Mr. P. J. Hannon, M.P., addressed a letter to the Home Secretary expressing the profound anxiety throughout the rank and file of the Conservative Party in regard to the "much too lenient attitude of the Government towards aliens in this country." Sir William Joynson-Hicks, however, replied that he was now quite satisfied with the present organisation of the Aliens Department in the matter of alien agitators.¹

With regard to alien immigration in general, a Bill named the "Aliens' Restriction Amendment Bill," which sought to continue the restrictions embodied in the Act of 1919, was introduced in the House of Lords and passed after its third reading on July 20, 1927. But there the matter ended. No time could be found to debate the question in the Commons, and the Bill was accordingly dropped.

The net result of the Government's policy on the alien question is shown by the following statistics:

The number of permits issued for the immigration of aliens for employment in this country during 1924 when the Labour Party was in office was 3,875; during 1925, after the Conservatives had been returned to power, it rose to 5,349, and in 1926 to 5,540.²

With regard to naturalisation, the Home Secretary stated in the House on July 14, 1927, that "in 1924, 935 aliens were naturalised in this country; in 1925, 1,074, and in 1926, 1,345; not a bad return for a Conservative Home Secretary as compared with his predecessor, a Labour Home Secretary."

But from what point of view was this "not bad"? From that of the "foreign humanity which would have done better to remain in its own country" or of Britons seeking in vain for work and houses? One reads these words with bewilderment. Unhappily this was not the only question on which the Conservative Government disappointed some of their most ardent supporters.

6. *The Reform of the House of Lords*

There was the matter of the Reform of the House of Lords, promised by Conservatives throughout succeeding Governments since 1922, and again by Mr. Baldwin before the General Election of 1924. In April 1925, in February, June and July 1927, debates took place on the subject, but in the end, as *The Times* expressed it, "the *ballon d'essai* of the reform

¹ *Daily Herald*, October 19, 1925.

² Statement in House of Commons on April 12, 1927.

of the House of Lords was allowed to float out of sight and out of mind."

The fact is that the Conservatives themselves were divided on the question, and the reason finally given for shelving it was the difficulty of getting unanimity as to what form the proposed reforms should take. Different views prevailed between Lords and Commons, and also between the Lords themselves. The Socialists, of course, opposed all question of reform, since in their opinion the House of Lords should be abolished altogether. This was only natural since men who have a stake in the country provide the principal obstacle to the predatory schemes of Socialism. Besides, the House of Lords is in the main representative of the traditions that Socialists are anxious to destroy. For, although in modern England it would be a mistake to confound rank with breeding, the House of Lords, in spite of dilution by plebeian elements, does still contain a majority of what can only be described as "gentlemen." The value of such men to the government of the country was well set forth 130 years ago by Professor Robison, whose definition of the term has, in my opinion, never been surpassed :

There is something that we call the behaviour of a Gentleman that is immediately and uniformly understood. The plainest peasant or labourer will say of a man whom he esteems in a certain way, "He is a Gentleman, every bit of him,"—and he is perfectly understood by all who hear him to mean, not a rank in life, but a turn of mind, a tenor of conduct that is amiable and worthy, and the ground of confidence. I remark, with some feeling of patriotic pride, that these are phrases almost peculiar to our language. . . . If therefore there be a foundation for this peculiarity, the Gentry are proper objects of choice for filling the House of Commons. . . . The history of Parliament will show that the Gentry have not been the most venal part of the House. The Illumination which now dazzles the world aims directly at multiplying the number of venal members, by filling the senates of Europe with men who may be bought at a low price. Ministerial corruption is the fruit of liberty.¹

The history of democracy since these words were written bears out this judgment and tends to show that nothing is more disastrous to a country than to be ruled by men who have nothing to lose.

¹ *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe*, carried on in the secret meetings of the Freemasons, Illuminati, etc., by John Robison, A.M. (1798), pp. 533-535.

The necessity for a rightly constituted Upper Chamber must therefore be apparent to everyone who desires to see the Mother of Parliaments restored to something of her ancient prestige.

7. Extension of Safeguarding

The Conservative Government of 1924-9, like that of 1923, was pledged not to introduce Protection or to impose any taxes on food.

But even the most convinced Cobdenites had recognised the necessity for some measure of protection against the influx of foreign goods, and Safeguarding, which is really only another name for Protection, had been introduced by the Act of June 1921 under the Coalition Government. Ardent Protectionists hoped that the Conservative Government of 1924 would avail themselves of the latitude this Act provided to extend Safeguarding to the heavy industries, but although some extensions were made—notably to lace, silk, gloves, cutlery, etc., and preference was given to Empire sugar and tobacco, whilst the MacKenna duties on motor-cars, cinema films, etc., repealed by the Labour Party in 1924, were reimposed, the principle was not applied to iron and steel or, again, to cotton goods, although such a measure was held in many quarters to be the only remedy for the industrial depression prevailing throughout the North of England. But it was precisely there that Protection met with the strongest opposition, and many convinced Protectionist reformers held that it would be unwise to impose further tariffs for the moment. The Party had already suffered one crushing defeat by going to the country on Protection, was it again to risk its whole existence on the same issue? There was much to be said for this contention, but it is difficult to understand why greater efforts were not made to bring the electorate over to the Protectionist point of view. If, as Mr. Baldwin had said in 1923, Protection was the only remedy for unemployment, why did the Party not reiterate this conviction on every possible occasion? Why, whenever the Conservatives were reproached for failing to do away with unemployment, did they not ceaselessly repeat that it was impossible as long as the country refused to accept that remedy? To harp on this string would have been to silence the Opposition, and possibly to convince the electorate of the necessity for further measures of Protection.

Such then was the manner in which the Conservative Government dealt with the first seven points of the programme

outlined at the beginning of the preceding chapter—the last two dealing with foreign and imperial policy will form the subject of succeeding chapters. It will be seen from this résumé that, as in 1923, they had carefully refrained from adopting “provocative” measures, preferring to take their stand on what they called a “constructive programme,” by which they meant a programme in no way distinctively Conservative. Apart from the few extensions they had given to Safeguarding, the reduction of the income-tax by 6d., the belated Trades Disputes Act and the rupture of relations with Russia, they had done nothing that could be described by the Labour Party as “reactionary.”

At the same time they had carried out a considerable amount of sound administration with regard to housing, education, health, agriculture and industry. The Rating and Valuation Act of 1925 brought much needed relief to productive industry by reducing rates on manufacturing premises, and this, together with the reduction of income-tax and the fresh Safeguarding measures, led to the result that the figures for unemployment were on the downward grade when the Government went out in May 1929.

Meanwhile the laudable attempt to bring about “Peace in Industry” by the scheme of “rationalisation” discussed at the so-called Turner-Mond Conferences (meetings between the Trade Union Congress headed by Mr. Ben Turner and the Employers’ Organisations, headed by Sir Alfred Mond, later Lord Melchett) led to no very definite results. Advocates of individual enterprise, whilst recognising the necessity of combined effort to eliminate unproductive mines, etc., and to restore industry, regarded the idea of rationalisation in the sense of big trusts and combines with disfavour as paving the way for nationalisation. Indeed, the Socialists openly proclaimed it as the first step to this goal, and it is questionable how far the T.U.C. supported it for this purpose.

In the field of social reform the Conservative Party’s achievements had been of no mean order—pensions had been given for the first time to widows and orphans, the age for Old Age Pensions had been reduced by five years, Government grants in aid of maternity and child welfare had been increased by 30 per cent., and infant mortality was alleged to have decreased by 10 per cent. Indeed, State Aid was carried beyond the point which the finances of the country appeared to justify, and in many quarters it was felt that it should at any rate have been accompanied by measures dealing with the abuse of

unemployment benefit. When at the time of the General Election a Party leaflet appeared, in which it was boasted that expenditure on Social Services had been increased by fifty millions,¹ people not unnaturally asked where was the retrenchment the Party had promised to carry out in view of the precarious condition of finance and industry.

Moreover, in embarking on this programme the Conservatives were entering into direct competition with the Socialists and were bound to come off worst in the contest. Whatever social reforms the Party might bring in, the Socialists were always prepared to go one better and to spend public money regardless of the financial resources of the country. It was easy to represent everything the Conservative Government had done as mere concessions to the more generous schemes of Socialist legislation. On one point at least the charge was justified. That was with regard to the decision taken by the Conservative Government in passing the Equal Franchise Bill of 1928, giving the vote to women at twenty-one.

It is perhaps not generally remembered that this Bill was originally a Socialist one, having been proposed by the Labour Government in 1924 under the name of the "Representation of the People Bill," and blocked by the Conservatives. But the idea went further back than this. As early as 1915, the "East London Federation of Suffragettes," led by Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, had changed the wording of its object: "To secure the Parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as men" into "To secure the vote for every woman over twenty-one."² Miss Pankhurst was elected honorary secretary and Miss Norah Smyth financial secretary. These two women were associated later in forming the Communist body known as "The Unemployed Workers' Organisation." At that date—three years before women's suffrage had become law—few people took the matter seriously, and it was not until Mr. Whiteley's Bill came up for its second reading on February 20, 1925, that the vote for women at twenty-one entered the sphere of "practical politics." On this occasion it was rejected by the Conservative Party—with the exception of a few members who voted with the Socialists—on the pretext that a conference of all Parties should be summoned to consider the question. But it was made clear that the

¹ Conservative Central Office leaflet headed *From the Cradle to Old Age*, incorrectly referred to in the House of Commons by Mr. Lloyd George on April 16, 1930, as "From the Cradle to the Grave."

² *The Herald*, January 9, 1915.

Party approved the Bill in principle, and that pledges somewhat to the same effect were given by Mr. Bonar Law in 1922 and by Mr. Baldwin during the General Election of 1924, when he stated that "The Unionist Party is in favour of equal political rights for men and women."

But this was not to say that votes were to be given to both sexes at twenty-one, and there were many Conservatives who held that the voting age should be raised to twenty-five for men and lowered from thirty to twenty-five for women. This was the view taken by the *Morning Post* on February 19, 1925. I cannot refrain from quoting here a letter I contributed to the same issue of that paper, which will show that the views expressed in this book are not a case of "being wise after the event."

SIR,

The Socialist Bill for the extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as men, that is to say, at the age of twenty-one, which is to come up for a second reading in the House on Friday, seems to have attracted little attention amongst the public. Yet should such a measure be passed it is impossible to over-estimate the far-reaching effects it might have on the destinies of our country.

I do not write as an Anti-Suffragist; on the contrary, I have always shared the opinion that the vote should be given to women with responsibilities and over a certain age. The recent election surely justified this view, for undoubtedly the women's vote largely contributed to the defeat of Communism. But this steadying influence must be attributed to the fact that the great majority of women voters were householders, mothers of families, etc., who instinctively stand for law and order.

The Socialists' answer to this objection is that women of twenty-one are not more irresponsible than men of the same age. But even if this be so, why increase the existing number of irresponsibles? The Socialists know very well why; they know that by the young and credulous their dazzling promises will be more easily believed than by women of maturer age; they know, moreover, that Socialism, like measles, is a youthful malady through which thousands of young men and women pass and from which in many cases they ultimately recover. If then they can succeed in lowering the age of voting for women to twenty-one, they will be able to catch them precisely as they are passing through the phase which will secure their vote for Socialism. Meanwhile, as the admirable article in to-day's *Morning Post* observes: "The full virus of Communism or the diluted poison of Labour Socialism" is being "pumped into their receptive systems." . . . If this Bill is passed an irresponsible electorate may one day turn the scale in favour of Communism and plunge the country into ruin.—NESTA H. WEBSTER.

February 18, 1925.

This appeal met with no support, the Conservatives, with whom I discussed the question at the time, observing that there was nothing to worry about as the Bill was never likely to become law. It was not until the Conservative Government, stealing the Socialists' thunder, brought in a Bill to the same effect, even bearing the same name, in 1928, that protests poured in from all sides and the *Daily Mail* embarked on a strenuous campaign against what it elected to term "The Flapper Vote." By that time it was of course too late and the Bill became law in time to assist in turning the scale against the Conservatives at the General Election of 1929.

How a Party that had adopted as its election slogan "Safety First" could have embarked on this vast change in the composition of the electorate which had given them their last overwhelming majority, is a problem that will puzzle posterity. The women in general had not asked for it, and politicians could not complain of extensive pressure being brought to bear on them in the matter. Lord Brentford has been generally accredited with the responsibility for carrying through the measure, and he certainly gave it his full support. But it seems probable that the real driving force came from a small but determined body of extreme Feminists in the background. These were largely concentrated in an association known as the "National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship," which had succeeded in gaining the ear of certain Cabinet Ministers and their womenkind, whom they persuaded that young women everywhere were clamouring for the vote and were sure to give it to whichever Party altered the franchise on their behalf. The Union professed to be non-party, concerned merely in backing candidates at election time who supported their views on the suffrage question irrespective of their attitude to other questions—a policy which in itself constituted a menace to the interests of the country. In reality, however, the overwhelming majority of women composing this group were either Liberals, Socialists, semi-Socialists or Pacifists, whose influence was hardly likely to be used in favour of Conservatism. Thus, in the *Annual Report of the N.U.S.E.C. for 1923-4* we read :

During the election a bureau of voluntary workers was organised, and help was given to Lady Astor, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Miss Helen Fraser and Mrs. Wintringham (all members or officers of the Executive Committee), Lady Terrington, Miss Margaret Bondfield and Miss Susan Lawrence.

Mr. Arthur Henderson had also been supported by the Union and mass meetings addressed on his behalf. On the other hand we read :

Many of our most conspicuously persistent opponents, including Lt.-Col. Archer Shee, Lt.-Col. du Pré, and Sir George Hamilton, failed to secure re-election, and the elevation to the Peerage of Sir Frederick Banbury disposed of our most astute and determined adversary as far as the House of Commons was concerned.

This was the body from which Conservative politicians fondly imagined they would receive support, and such was the influence that the N.U.S.E.C. succeeded in obtaining in the counsels of the Party that it was able to stifle all criticism.

In 1925 a series of talks by the N.U.S.E.C. was broadcast by the B.B.C., then under the control of the Conservative Government, at a time when controversial political topics were supposed to be strictly barred, but its opponents were not allowed a hearing. The Conservative Central Office's Handbook in fact admits the influence exercised by the N.U.S.E.C. over its decisions.¹ A friend of the present writer who inquired at the Central Office why the vote should be given to young women who had not asked for it, received the astonishing reply : " Oh, but the Feminists demand it ! " But what proportion of the womanhood of Great Britain do the Feminists represent ?

This mood sat the more oddly on the Conservative Party, since in the past it had never viewed the entry of women into politics with particular favour. It was not merely a matter of sitting in Parliament. Probably few politicians of any Party secretly approve of women invading the benches of the House, a point of view with which I confess myself in sympathy, for the sake of the women themselves. The House of Commons is not the place where women, however gifted, are seen to the best advantage. But many Conservatives went further than this, they disapproved of any women being given the vote ; some indeed considered that they should take no part in politics at all, except as humble Party workers at election time. The result of this attitude has been to drive ambitious women without settled convictions into the Liberal and Labour Parties.

The granting of votes to women at twenty-one by the Conservatives was, therefore, a concession to opinions in which

¹ *Election Notes for Conservative Speakers*, published by the National Union of Conservative Associations, 1929, p. 254.

they did not really believe; indeed, this was practically admitted by Conservative officials who justified the Bill by saying quite openly: "If we do not pass it the Socialists will." The same reasoning might apply to the abolition of the Monarchy or the break-up of the British Empire. Defeatism carried to the extent of anticipating its opponents' measures can only lead to the ultimate extinction of the Conservative Party.

If the authors of the Bill really imagined that the two and a half million young women, on whom they had conferred the vote, would give it in their favour from a sense of gratitude they were destined to disillusionment. As Mr. Ramsay MacDonald observed after the election was over: "The Tories . . . certainly ought not to have extended the franchise to the young women. . . . The young woman has added thousands to our majorities, especially in the industrial districts."¹

At any rate, the young women's vote was sufficient to tip the balance at what was already an extremely critical election. The swing of the pendulum was against the Conservative Party; the Liberals were not prepared this time to stand down in their favour in order to keep the Socialists out as at the General Election of 1924; no bomb to take the place of the "Zinoviev Letter" had been provided; the Conservative electorate was discouraged; the Die-Hards, now wholly occupied with the Tariff question, were threatening revolt.

Meanwhile the Beaverbrook and Rothermere Press, which had contributed to the Conservative victory of 1924, had withdrawn their support and continued to attack Mr. Baldwin on the score of weakness, indecision, half-hearted Conservatism, etc.

But what had this same Press done recently to further the Conservative cause? The Beaverbrook organs, as has already been pointed out, had consistently advocated relations with Russia, and, except in the masterly articles of Mr. A. A. Baumann, had never given great encouragement to a robust form of Conservatism, whilst opening their columns to the most subversive writers. And on the eve of the election Lord Beaverbrook had found no more inspiring slogan than "larger railway trucks."

The Rothermere Press, on the other hand, had shown itself resolutely anti-Bolshevist, had urged "a hundred per cent. Conservatism" and published an immense number of able and patriotic articles from the pens of such writers as Mr.

¹ Interview in *Daily Herald*, June 3, 1929.

Ward Price, Mr. Britten Austin, etc. But the effect of all this was somewhat marred by a sudden *volte-face* in October 1928, in the form of a leading article which declared that, now the Labour Party was "under the control of the moderate elements," "distinct benefits" might result from the advent of a Labour-Liberal Coalition.¹ In the spring of the following year, however, just before the General Election, the same Press decided for Liberalism alone, and urged the electorate to vote for "the Happy Warrior" in the person of Mr. Lloyd George. In view of the strictures it had passed on Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government in 1922,² the organs controlled by Lord Rothermere could hardly be regarded as consistent guides for public opinion. Their effect at this moment was in the main destructive, for whilst they succeeded in preventing a number of people from voting for the Party led by Mr. Baldwin, they were unable to make them vote for Mr. Lloyd George to any appreciable extent.

The corollary to all this was the crushing defeat of the Conservatives at the General Election of May 30, 1929, from which the three Parties emerged as follows :

Conservatives	.	.	.	260
Liberals	.	.	.	58
Labour	.	.	.	289

The Conservatives had thus lost 155 seats since the General Election of 1924, whilst the Labour Party had gained 138.

The Labour Party well knew all along which way votes were going. Owing to its admirable Intelligence Service it was able to keep its fingers on the pulse of the country and bring influence to bear where it was most needed. The Conservatives had no organisation comparable with this, as was shown by their over-confidence before the General Election, when they predicted a majority of sixty seats. Had they possessed any Intelligence Service worthy of the name they would have known this was an impossibility. It was known to many of their supporters who had not their facilities for obtaining information, and the newspaper competitions showed that a number of people had foretold almost the exact figures. Why then should the Conservative Central Office have been so wide of the mark?

When, after the debacle, a storm of questioning arose as to its causes, the principal criticisms were directed against

¹ *Continental Daily Mail and Sunday Despatch*, October 21, 1928.

² See *ante*, p. 207.

the leader of the Party and the head of the Central Office. But why had these vocal elements not pressed their demands for a stronger policy and better organisation more vigorously before, instead of contenting themselves with vague murmurs and desultory protests that always ended in the rebels being brought repentantly to heel? Whatever then may be said of Mr. Baldwin's policy, subsequent Party meetings and the correspondence that took place in the Press clearly showed that it had the support of the great majority of Conservative Members of Parliament and electors to whom anything savouring of "Die-Hardism" was abhorrent. Of this mass of Conservative opinion Mr. Baldwin was the faithful exponent; a Prime Minister who had immediately set to work to rouse the electorate to action and advocated a more vigorous policy would, in all probability, not have been able to retain his hold over them.

But this is not to say that if a steady educative campaign had been carried on throughout the Conservatives' five years' term of office, the country would not have been gradually persuaded to follow a stronger lead. Instead of this the public, already too prone to slumber in the face of danger, was lulled with the assurance that there was no cause for alarm, that it would be "all right on the night," and that the by-elections, which were going heavily against the Conservative Party, were no real indication of which way the tide was flowing. For all this the Conservative Central Office was primarily to blame, yet in my opinion—and I speak with some inside knowledge of events—it was a mistake to lay the whole responsibility on the shoulders of the late chairman. The trouble went deeper than the public realised and, as was shown earlier in this book, existed long before Mr. Davidson took control. In the matter of appointing candidates, of selecting and priming speakers, of publicity and propaganda, the whole system was at fault, as obsolete for present-day electioneering purposes as a Crimean cannon for modern warfare, and it is questionable whether any man, however energetic, would have been able to hold his own against the forces at work to prevent its being rendered more efficient.

Above all, it was not constructed to fight Socialism in a really scientific manner, nor did the Party officials give great encouragement to other organisations and individuals who were carrying on anti-Socialist propaganda. Several of the independent societies had done extremely good work since

the War. It is true that there were too many of them and that, as the Conservative Central Office complained, a great deal of reduplication and overlapping had taken place. But this state of affairs could have been avoided if some scheme of "rationalisation" had been devised at the outset, by which the "unproductive" societies would have been put out of existence and the work of the others co-ordinated so that each should have its appointed task. The Duke of Northumberland made an effort in this direction when in June 1921 he proposed to form a Federation of all the propaganda societies which would "not interfere with the special work of any, but link them together in certain aims."¹ The plan fell through, however, owing to the difficulty of getting the chairmen and secretaries of the different organisations to unite in the common cause.

Another attempt was made in the spring of 1925, when a central clearing-house was proposed by one of the leading societies, which was to work in co-operation, not only with all the associations in this country, but with kindred groups abroad. This might have led to great results, since the world revolutionary movement has owed its success mainly to its system of international organisation and the lack of any corresponding organisation on the part of its opponents. But instead of supporting a movement which could have rendered inestimable service to the Conservative cause, the Central Office of the Party appeared to regard it as an infringement of its own rights. The Conservative and Unionist Party, its official organ observed at this crisis, has "the biggest claim as an anti-Socialist society."² The leaders of the independent societies were summoned to Palace Chambers, and on the following day it was announced that the whole scheme had been abandoned.

But on what did the claim of the Central Office rest? Had it in its vast organisation any department devoted to work against Socialism? Did it employ a single specialist of repute? Whilst the Labour Research Department employed no less than twenty linguists, had the Central Office on its staff even one Russian to provide it with reliable information on Russian affairs? An example of the kind of propaganda it circulated on these questions is provided by the following incident:

In 1924 I inquired at the Central Office for literature to counteract Marxism and was told that none could be provided.

¹ *Morning Post*, June 21, 1921.

² *Home and Politics*, February 1925.

A year later, however, a brochure was sent me from Palace Chambers entitled *The Socialists' Bible*, bearing on the cover a quite pleasing portrait of the prophet, and containing a fairly good refutation of Marx's economic theories. But the argument ended with these surprising words :

The life of Marx revealed great work and purpose. He evoked a tremendous reverberation from the dark abysses created by plutocracy. He wrote a resounding message in letters of flame at the feast of sordid and callous wealth . . . he left a great example to whole generations of men and women to labour earnestly for a better and more worthy environment.

And this was supposed to be Conservative propaganda ! The writer had apparently never studied the private life of one of the most cunning impostors who has ever been foisted on the credulity of the working-classes.

This failure to provide really effectual propaganda against Socialism was the principal cause of the Conservative debacle. The alternative policy of putting forward what was called " a constructive programme " was bound to fail because the Socialists could always beat the Conservatives on this ground by promising Paradise where the Conservatives promised only improvement in existing conditions. *It was essential to convince the people of the fallacy and the danger of Socialist nostrums if they were to be persuaded to accept Conservative remedies.* But the Conservatives were obsessed with the fear of seeming " reactionary " or of indulging in " personalities." The current phrase throughout the Party was : " We must not be merely ' Anti,' " which ended in almost completely extinguishing the fighting spirit.

It will be noticed, however, that the Labour Party has always pursued an " Anti " policy, its most powerful line of propaganda consisting of declamations on the faults, the failings and the vices of Capitalism together with personalities of the most offensive kind. In this respect there is little to choose between Socialists and Communists ; the front page of the I.L.P. paper, *Forward*, is indistinguishable from the columns of the *Daily Worker*.

The " Labour " Party in its 1928 manifesto, *Labour and the Nation*, and Mr. Philip Snowden in his *Morning Post* article of February 15, 1929, had sounded the call to class warfare in no uncertain tone :

The existence of a rich class is responsible for the poverty of the mass and for the social evil of the slums, physical deterioration,

ill-health, inadequate education, and industrial inefficiency. . . . When money . . . is left with the individual there is . . . the reasonable assumption that it will be wasted in luxury and riotous living.

The *Daily Herald* had said much the same thing in 1921, when, speaking of the fund which should supply the needs of the workers, it declared: "The fund is there all right; it is in the pockets of the rich"; and Mr. Clynes in stating that the purpose of the Labour Party was "to take from the rich and give to the poor, even though the poor might not deserve it."¹

The rancorous spirit of these utterances was equalled only by its insincerity. None but anarchists or the small body of Socialists known as "Distributionists," led by Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, really propose to divide up wealth, the plan of the Labour Party, as set forth by Mr. Snowden himself,² being to place it all under public control; that is to say, in the hands of the State. Nor have Socialists themselves shown the least inclination to share their own possessions with their needy brethren.³ The truth is that they are not the friends of the poor, but only the enemies of the rich.

It must not be forgotten that, whatever pronouncements they may make in public for immediate political purposes, the Labour Party has always been mainly directed by the I.L.P., to which no fewer than 117 Labour Members of Parliament under the last (Conservative) Government and 200 under the present (Labour) Government at the time of its accession belonged. The Labour Party and, to a large extent, the T.U.C. have therefore been throughout committed to the I.L.P. policy of "no peace in industry" until Capitalism is abolished and Socialism installed.

The Conservatives persisted in shutting their eyes to all this, and in declaring that the Labour Party was quite harmless and that its leaders were "very good fellows," perfectly honest, sincerely devoted to the cause of the workers, only a little mistaken in their ideas of the way in which conditions should be improved. Not only were their war records to be forgotten, but the part they had played in the general strike

¹ Debate in Parliament, January 17, 1924.

² See *ante*, p. 180.

³ A number of Labour Members own motor-cars, even Rolls-Royces are not unknown amongst them. The *Hôtel du Cap*, at Antibes, one of the most expensive hotels on the Continent, is a favourite resort of Socialists every summer. In September 1929 the wife of a Labour Member was reported as having lost a pearl necklace valued at £6,000.

was not to be recalled. Whilst Mr. Cook might be used occasionally as a target, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Snowden were to be immune. I have heard a Conservative Cabinet Minister, reputedly a "stronger" man than Mr. Baldwin, carefully impressing upon an audience of Conservative workers that they must not confuse Socialism and Communism, and that whilst Communism must be condemned, Socialism was not so much to be feared. The point that needed to be brought home to them was that Socialism and Communism lead to the same goal, and that Socialism, being more insidious, presents the greater danger.

The fact is that owing to their imperfect understanding of its real aims and methods, many Conservatives suffer from an uneasy feeling that "there is something to be said" for Socialism, and that in opposing it they will be ranging themselves against the working-classes.

In an interview given to the *People* in 1924, Mr. Baldwin himself was represented as saying :

Every future Government must be socialistic in the sense in which our grandfathers used the word. Personally I don't know what Socialism means.¹

This sentence may well have been wrongly reported, but it is certainly what many Conservatives might have said who imagine that Socialism is only an extreme kind of social reform. In reality our grandfathers—those at least who knew what they were talking about—used the word in exactly the same sense as we do to-day, and repudiated it as strongly as we do. The great Lord Shaftesbury opposed Socialism as ardently as he supported social reform. As long ago as 1886 the writer of an admirable pamphlet pointed out the confusion that arises from the misuse of the term :

It is sheer waste of time to beg the whole question by treating the word "Socialism" as a mere extension or derivative of the word "social." If this schoolgirl method of interpretation is to be adopted and etymology is to settle meanings offhand in defiance of usage, we shall find ourselves committed to innumerable absurdities. We shall find, for instance, that being methodical is identical with Methodism, that a frightened man is a Quaker. . . . Socialism is far from being identical with social progress or the social instincts and virtues.²

¹ Reproduced in *Morning Post*, May 19, 1924.

² *Mrs. Besant's Socialism*, by W. P. Ball.

The axiom that should be hammered into every Conservative's head, that should be written up in large letters in every Conservative lecture-room and ceaselessly repeated in Conservative leaflets is that SOCIALISM IS NOT SOCIAL REFORM. Socialism is the negation of reform. To speak of Socialist "ideals" is to mislead the public. Communism in its early stages, when bands of men and women formed themselves into communities holding everything in common, might be said to comprise ideals, but Socialism, particularly since the days of Marx, has never advocated a system of this kind, but simply the creation of a soulless bureaucracy which would reduce the mass of the people to servitude. To call this an ideal is absurd. Such sane ideals as individual Socialists may entertain are those common to every humane and generous mind, and not peculiar to Socialism, but on the contrary extraneous to it.

As a result of the confused thinking on this subject, which prevailed in the Conservative Party during the last Government, a certain number of Party members had ceased to be Conservatives at all and had become half-convinced Socialists far more hostile to the Right Wing of Conservatism than to the Labour Party, their theory being that *au fond* Conservatism and Socialism have much in common and should come to an understanding. This was the idea of the group that came to be known as the Y.M.C.A., because it was composed of the younger members of the Party, a fact that was the more regrettable since there was nothing of which the Party stood more in need than "young blood." But instead of bringing fresh vigour into the body of Conservatism, this group became the great hope of the Socialists.

There is a large section of the Tory Party [Mr. Ramsay MacDonald pointed out], especially the young Tories, who are men of very great promise. . . . Their colleagues, the representatives of massed capital, the old reactionary machine Tories, have more trouble with the young Tories than they have even with us. Sooner or later the free mind and the courageous intelligence, and an unfettered desire to hammer out a national policy, will have to be taken up by the young Tories, not as party politicians, but as men with a national outlook. When they face that problem, the partition between us and them will be so thin that they might as well break it down and come over to the Socialists' camp.¹

If these young men imagined that by diluting Conservatism with Socialism they were enhancing their Party in the eyes

¹ Speech at Penzance, April 18, 1925.

of the Opposition, they were strangely mistaken. By taking their stand firmly on the principles they were supposed to represent, they would have won the respect instead of the patronising commendation of their opponents.

The fact is: *if the nation wants Socialism it will go for it to the Socialist Party; it will not accept it second-hand from the Tory benches.* The answer to the young Conservatives' bid for favour was the extinction of several members of the group at the general election, and their replacement by full-blooded Socialists sailing under their true colours—the Red Flag.

The fact that these Left Wing elements were not brought to book, combined with Mr. Baldwin's non-combatant attitude towards the Labour Party, naturally gave some colour to the theory constantly proclaimed by the Rothermere Press—and entertained in many responsible quarters—that the Prime Minister himself was not unsympathetic to Socialist ideas. It has always seemed to the present writer a matter for regret that Mr. Baldwin did not see his way to making a public declaration to a contrary effect, reiterating his belief in social reform, but whole-hearted detestation of Socialism. Such a pronouncement would have gone far to rally disheartened Conservatives throughout the country who had no means of knowing what truth there might be in these rumours.

Unfortunately the anxiety thus created, as also the deep dissatisfaction that prevailed amongst Conservatives all over the country with regard to certain points in the Party's policy which found expression on several occasions, was usually met by charges of disloyalty against those who dared to speak their minds, rather than by assurances calculated to restore confidence. This cry of "loyalty to our leaders"—still raised to stifle all criticism—appeals to the best instincts of the Conservative rank and file by suggesting a false analogy with military leadership. But soldiers in a regiment do not choose their officers, and they are bound to obey them unquestioningly. Conservatives are under no such obligation to the representatives they have themselves elected, and it is their right, and even their duty, to protest if they consider that they are being led in the wrong direction. However admirable loyalty to political leaders may be, loyalty to principles is more admirable still, and the allegiance of supporters, who are resolved that the principles of their Party shall be adhered to, is of more value to the Conservative cause than that of sheep who are content to follow blindly. Do not

the leaders, moreover, owe loyalty to their supporters and an explanation of their actions when this is required? It is only a dictator who can say: "Leave all questions of policy to me; your duty is to obey unquestioningly." The Party leader in a State where suffrage has become universal is obliged to explain his policy and submit to questioning if he hopes for support. *He cannot afford to be misunderstood.* He cannot shrug his shoulders and say that it matters nothing what the man in the street may think. To-day, thanks to the action of the Conservatives themselves, not only the man in the street but the girl in the cinema are the arbiters of the country's destiny, and the issues at stake must be made clear to them if their vote is not to be used against the interests of the country.

But the indifference to the opinion of the electorate was common to many Conservative Members of Parliament who had not marched with the times, and formed a sharp contrast to the attitude of Labour Members who freely mingled with their constituents and were careful not to offend their more "extreme" supporters. Lord Brentford once observed in an address to the Anti-Socialist Union that the strength of every Party lies in its extreme wing. This truth was unfortunately not sufficiently appreciated by those Conservatives whose policy was to placate their enemies and alienate their friends. The cricket spirit so freely displayed towards their opponents was too often lacking in their relations with their own side. Whilst making perpetual concessions to Socialism, they made none to true democracy; they did not trouble to keep in touch with the rank and file; they did not encourage, indeed they often actually discouraged, their most ardent supporters. What wonder then that when election time came round it proved no easy matter to rouse their constituents to enthusiasm? The electors well remembered the oratory those same members had employed five years earlier, the visions they had conjured up of what they would do if they were returned to Parliament, yet once they had taken their seats, their interest in these questions seemed to vanish and "parliamentary paralysis" had overcome them. It was with difficulty that they could be persuaded even to be present at important debates. At the moment of writing, this habit of absenteeism has begun to disturb the equanimity of Mr. Baldwin himself and reprimands are being addressed to slackers. A better remedy would surely be to appoint candidates whose zeal for the cause would obviate the necessity for either whips or Ministerial reproofs in order to ensure their

attendance. As long as candidates are chosen, not for their personal worth or ability, but according to the amount they can contribute towards their election expenses, this spirit of indifference will continue to pervade the Tory benches.

Such were some of the causes that led up to the great Conservative debacle of 1929. Weakness towards Socialism at home and, as will be seen in the ensuing chapters, the policy of compromise and concession with regard to foreign relations and to British interests in the East, had steadily brought down the credit of the Party that had stood so high in 1924. An immense discouragement had taken hold of the Conservative electorate, and it is probable that abstentions, even more than adverse votes, sealed its fate at the polls.

The Labour Party showed no gratitude for the indulgence shown them. Although throughout their five years' term of office Mr. Baldwin and his supporters had continued in the spirit of the Premier's "Peace in our time" speech to refrain from aggression, and had sought every opportunity for conciliating the Opposition, the Labour Party returned this magnanimity with insults and abuse.

On September 25, 1926, the *Daily Herald* declared :

Never has a Government so shamefully sought to ensure victory for its capitalist friends as the Government of which Mr. Baldwin is the head. Under an appearance of sympathy with the workers, under the cloak of "Peace in our time" appeals, it has relentlessly sought to depress the standard of life, reduce the wages and increase the economic hardship of the millions of workers and their families.

On the same day this paragraph appeared in *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* :

Stanley Baldwin, by the grace of the Father of all Liars, Prime Minister of Britain, is once again revealed as the most incompetent and brutally stupid person this nation has ever been afflicted with as chief of the State. Elected to power by the most infamous and blackguardly campaign of Lies ever experienced in this island, he has succeeded in proving himself worthy of such a campaign by breaking every pledge and promise made to the electorate.

"Mr. Baldwin," said "Labour's Own Organ" on August 29, 1927, "has lost no time in picking up his old trail of humbug . . . his speech was characterised by the same professions of honesty and goodwill, the same pose of benevolent friendship to the workers. . . . Actively and inactively he has done more than any other man to sharpen the class struggle.

...¹ Or again: "The hissing [of the Labour Party] that ushered Mr. Baldwin out of the Chamber . . . was no mere transient ebullition of Party feeling. It betokened a deep moral loathing of a 'statesman' who shirks his cardinal duties."²

As the general election approached, the *Daily Herald* declared that the slump in the Tory vote (at by-elections) was due to the "criminal futility of the Baldwin Government. The Premier's sins are finding him out."³

During the election campaign the *Daily Herald* issued a series of abusive panels in its columns, in which the Tories were described under such choice headings as "Starving the Poor," "Robbing the Worker," "Against the Women," "The Farm-worker's Enemy," etc.

Once again experience proved the soundness of the principle: "The best method of defence is attack." By abandoning the attack on Socialism which had carried them to victory in 1924, the Conservatives had surrendered their strongest line of defence and laid themselves open to attack from enemies on whom magnanimity was wasted and with whom weakness was fatal.

¹ *Daily Herald*, August 29, 1927.

² *Ibid.*, November 17, 1927.

³ *Ibid.*, January 31, 1929.

CHAPTER XV

PEACE AND POISON GAS

THERE is a favourite theory current on the Continent to the effect that Great Britain has continuously pursued a Machiavellian scheme for reducing all other Powers to impotence by the policy of *Divide et Impera*. The whole idea of the Cavallerie de St. Georges set forth by certain French publicists is founded on this conviction. Moreover, in order to carry on this fell design the British Government has at its disposal a vast network of agents in the form of the "British Intelligence Service," with headquarters, we have been seriously assured, at No. 10, Downing Street. Ever since the days when "l'or de Pitt" was said to have financed the succeeding outbreaks of the French Revolution, the gold and cunning of Britain have been suspected of playing a leading part in the troubles of the world.

The present writer once asked an eminent English diplomat whether any foundation of truth lay at the bottom of this legend: "Has England ever been guilty of the methods habitually pursued by Prussia from the eighteenth century onwards of fomenting discord for the sake of her own aggrandisement? Has she a secret policy of which the British citizen knows nothing, for maintaining her own stability amidst the crash of empires and the fall of foreign thrones?"

To which the diplomat responded with a sigh: "Would to God she had! Would to God that she had *any* settled policy on which one could depend!"

The unhappy truth is that, since the War, the only continuity of foreign policy observable under each Government in turn, whether Liberal, Conservative or "Labour," has been that of surrendering one by one the most vital interests of the British Empire.

As Mr. Winston Churchill recently expressed it:

During the last few years a sense of powerlessness must have come across those who have taken part in the triumphant exertions which

the British Empire has made in the present century. Some spring seems to have snapped in the national consciousness. There is a readiness to cast away all that has been won by measureless sacrifices and achievements. We seem to be the only great nation which dare not speak up for itself, which has lost confidence in its mission, which is ready to resign its hard-won rights.¹

We have seen this process at work throughout the successive chapters of this book—the prizes of victory in the Great War thrown away, the heroism of our soldiers publicly disparaged, concessions made to the promoters of sedition, our friends estranged, our enemies cajoled, our statesmen apologising for the very existence of the British Empire. On the accession of each Government in turn, hopes have arisen that at last bolder hands would guide the country's destinies, only every time to be dashed by the realisation that *plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*.

The Conservative Government of 1924 raised these hopes higher than ever, not only with regard to internal affairs but in the matter of foreign relations. The Russian question, as we saw in the last chapter, had at the time of the Arcos raid been firmly dealt with, and when the Soviet Embassy was removed from London, the most important channel for propaganda—the Foreign Office bag—was done away with. With the withdrawal of diplomatic immunity, Soviet activities in this country were thus considerably curtailed.

In the matter of France and Germany the prospect at the outset seemed equally propitious. Lord Curzon's relations with France had not been too happy, but the appointment of Sir Austen Chamberlain, whose francophile sympathies were well known, to the post of Foreign Secretary boded well for the strengthening of the Entente. It was, moreover, the change in the direction of the Foreign Office from Socialist to Conservative control that, as was related in Chapter XI, prevented the realisation of Mr. MacDonald's cherished scheme—the "Geneva Protocol." At the meeting of the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva on March 9, 1925, the Protocol was definitely turned down by Sir Austen Chamberlain.

So far so good. But by the autumn of the same year the Foreign Secretary, who up to this moment had dealt successfully with realities, seemed to have become hypnotised by the unreal atmosphere of Locarno. It will perhaps one day be recognised that languorous southern resorts are not the best places for international conferences to be held. Cannes,

¹ Speech to the Navy League, February 26, 1930.

Genoa, Rapallo—all these lotus-eating lands in turn had cast their spell on the assembled representatives of the nations, and one is led to wonder what would have been the result of their deliberations had these same conferences been held, say, in Manchester or Lille.

Yet one more of these charming treats was arranged for October 3, 1925, and we read that on October 10 at half-past two o'clock Sir Austen Chamberlain, M. Briand, and Herren Luther and Stresemann, accompanied by secretaries and advisers, embarked in a large motor-boat with the pleasant name of *Fiori d'Arancio* (Orange Blossom) upon the blue and placid waters of Lake Maggiore for the purpose of holding conversations on board. . . . They returned towards the evening."¹

The principal question under discussion was again that of security, and it might have been expected that now at last France would be given the guarantees for which she had waited throughout seven long years. Instead of this, at the Conference of October 16, the representatives of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany drew up the pact known as the Locarno Treaty, whereby France and Germany undertook not to attack each other, and Great Britain and Italy undertook to come to the rescue of either if attacked by the other. So that France who, by general consent of the Allies, had been declared the victim of wanton aggression in 1914, was placed on the same footing as Germany who had been recognised as the aggressor. At the same time Great Britain was to reap no corresponding advantage from the compact, neither Power having undertaken to come to her rescue in the event of her becoming the victim of aggression.

France, however, felt she had gained some measure of security, and M. Briand cheerfully appended his signature to the Treaty. The "Locarno spirit" was hailed with rapture by optimists everywhere; now at last the real millennium had dawned. The feud between France and Germany was dead, ended by a scene of reconciliation as touching as the famous "baiser Lamourette" of July 7, 1792, when the warring factions in the Legislative Assembly threw themselves into each other's arms and embraced "with torrents of tears"—as a prelude to the torrents of blood shed a month later at the sack of the Tuileries.

The next step was to get Germany into the League of Nations, although hitherto she had shown little sympathy with its aims.

¹ *The Times*, October 12, 1925.

It is doubtless true that the majority of the German people, and the Social Democrats in particular, were sick of militarism and desired peace in future, but, with the exception of the small body of Pacifists enrolled in the "Menschheit" group, no section of the German people had ever admitted Germany's "war guilt." How then could they sympathise with a League created by those whom they regarded as the real authors of the War? As *The Times* correspondent observed at the time of the Locarno Conference: "The Germans from Herren Luther and Stresemann to the rank and file of their Socialist opposition dislike and distrust the League"—regarding it as the instrument of the Allies. Many Germans, too, inclined to the commonly expressed view of the Nationalists that "Great Britain and France are decadent nations ripe for disintegration."¹ As to the Nationalists themselves, the German correspondent of the *Evening Standard*, commenting on their successes at the polls in December 1924, remarked:

The election has shown that the great majority of the German upper and middle classes, far from being morally disarmed, are just as militarist as when they shouted for war in 1914. They have learnt nothing from the defeat of Germany.²

The Germans, however, were shrewd enough to perceive certain advantages which might be gained by entering the League—"the protection of German minorities, a change in the regime of the Saar, the assignment to Germany of colonial mandates on an equal footing with other countries,"³ and an earlier evacuation of the Rhineland.

Accordingly Germany expressed her willingness to join the League. There was no question of repentance or of abjuring war as a principle. To quote *The Times* again: "Germany is not seeking a Pact from any abstract interest in peace; post-war Germany holds Pacifism in the deepest contempt."⁴ The Pacifists of the "Menschheit" group were subjected to relentless persecution by Press and politicians alike. As Carl Mertens, a leader of this group, wrote in 1928:

There is no Pacifist known in Germany, including Professor Quidde who obtained the Nobel Prize in 1927, who has not yet been proceeded against for high treason. . . . The true German who desires for his country another ideal than that based on military exercises and victorious wars, and who wants to see German

¹ *The Times*, October 12, 1925.

² Date of December 12, 1924.

³ *The Times*, October 12, 1925.

politics inspired by moral laws and the principles of loyalty, is banished from his country: a thousand newspapers abuse him, judges proceed against him and politicians insult him.¹

But nothing of this damped the ardour of believers in Germany's change of heart. So eager were British politicians to see her enrolled in the League of Nations, and so much pressure was brought to bear on Sir Austen Chamberlain in the matter, that Sir Alfred Mond (later Lord Melchett) was moved to protest against the wave of pro-Germanism that was passing over the country. Speaking from the Ministerial benches in the House of Commons on March 5, 1926, he "expressed amazement at the way in which pro-German propaganda seemed to have succeeded in capturing the British public and a large number of the House of Commons. (Loud cries of 'Oh!') It was a remarkable thing that in the House and in the country it was almost looked upon as *lèse-majesté* for anyone to put forward any case which might appear at present not pleasing to the German Government or the German people. The Foreign Secretary," he added, "must be allowed to feel his way."

This was no doubt true as far as the intelligentsia and certain circles in the City were concerned. The great mass of the nation was not pro-German, but amongst the vocal elements—speakers, writers, politicians, publicists, preachers—the plea for Germany to be welcomed into the councils of the nations made itself loudly heard. The propaganda of the League of Nations Union was carried out with skill and thoroughness, and met, moreover, with no counterblast from any organised opposition. Inevitably the League of Nations won the day, and at its Annual Assembly in September 1926 Germany's admission was unanimously voted. "Germany," says the L.N.U.'s own account of this great occasion, "was declared a member of the League amidst a tempest of applause. . . . The news once flashed to Berlin, Dr. Stresemann and his colleagues, waiting with bags packed for the word, set off for Switzerland. . . . The reception awaiting them at the station in Geneva was tumultuous. . . ." The entry of "the sturdy thickset figure and close-cropped head of the German Foreign Minister, followed by his two colleagues," was greeted with "salvos of applause."

In his speech Dr. Stresemann emphasised the necessity of looking to the future rather than dwelling on the past—here clearly no "change of heart" was indicated—and graciously

¹ *France threatened by the German Sword.*

informed the Assembly that Germany once hostile to the League had now become converted to it.

M. Briand, in a more emotional strain of oratory, concurred in this desire to bury the past. "With a sudden ringing asseveration," he repeated the words: "c'est fini." " ' Ended,' for France and Germany the long succession of sanguinary encounters with which every page of history in the past had been stained. ' Ended,' war between the peoples. ' Ended,' the long veils of mourning over sufferings that will never heal."¹

A tempest of applause greeted this speech, one delegate rose and "waved a highly coloured handkerchief around his head." Nothing had been seen like it since the French Constituent Assembly had abolished war in 1791.

But even before the next Annual Assembly of the League of Nations the rattling of the German sabre had been heard again. The evacuation of the Rhineland had taken place less rapidly than Germany had hoped as a result of Locarno, and a violently anti-French speech by Herr von Kadorff at the celebration of the Weimar Constitution met with support from Dr. Stresemann.²

Meanwhile disquieting facts with regard to militarist activities in Germany had been brought to light by German Pacifists and Socialists. In December 1926 the "Menschheit" group drew attention to the danger of the so-called patriotic associations carrying on military training throughout Germany.

In the event of a war the 100,000 men of the Reichswehr will be supplemented by 150,000 men of the Schutzpolizei [armed police] and 2,000,000 men of the *Vaterländischen Verbände* [Leagues of the Fatherland], associations of Officers and Regimental Associations. The preparations for this increase in the army are already being made in secret district commands. . . . The heads of the district commands are former officers who occupy civil posts in the Reichswehr.³

In *France threatened by the German Sword*, written in February 1928, Carl Mertens declared that no less than 5,000,000 Germans were organised in the Nationalist associations alone.⁴

¹ *Geneva in 1926*, by Wilson Harris, pp. 12-16, pamphlet issued by the League of Nations Union.

² *The Observer*, August 14, 1927.

³ *Die Menschheit*, December 3, 1926.

⁴ See interesting article "German Ex-Service Men and Peace," by Colonel Crosfield, Chairman of the British Legion, in the *English Review* for September 1927, which tends to confirm these statements; also "German Armaments" in the *Review of Reviews* for August 15, 1927.

Important facts relating to these illegal military associations have appeared from time to time in the British Press. Thus in May 1926 it was announced that a plot to seize Berlin and restore the monarchy had been discovered. In consequence, two of the most active of these bodies, the Olympia Association and the Viking League—the successor of Organisation C—which were suddenly found to be indulging in military exercises, were said to have been suppressed.¹ Indeed, in November 1926 one of the Generals of the Military Commission in Berlin declared that out of all the countless “patriotic associations” of the Fatherland, only two of noteworthy size still remained in existence—the Young German Order (Jungdeutsche Orden) and the Steel Helmets (Stahlhelm).² In February 1928 it was, however, discovered that the Viking League under Captain Ehrhardt (the Herr Consul of Organisation C) was maintaining a very active existence underground,³ and in December it was found to be at work in Kirchhain, carrying out nocturnal military training by the followers of Hitler under the direction of Reichswehr officers.⁴

The Stahlhelm, which comprised 350,000 members, all trained soldiers and accustomed to the use of arms, was also carrying out manœuvres in the autumn of 1929, an account of which appeared in the *Morning Post* of September 26, and a few weeks later it was announced that the Stahlhelm also was now to be dissolved. The *Morning Post*, in recording this decision, charitably observed:

This measure is particularly important since now official Germany has had the courage not only to admit that militant bodies have been contravening the Treaty of Versailles, but also to suppress them.⁵

In March 1930, however, the Stahlhelm was still going strong in Berlin, and the *Daily Herald* reported that its “chief centres were being inspected by Colonel Nikolai, one of the collaborators of Ludendorff during the War, who was ‘working hand in hand with important officials of the Reichswehr.’”⁶

The farce was ended when in July President Hindenburg, who was himself a member of the Stahlhelm, intimated that he would not pay his promised visit to the Rhineland unless the ban on the Stahlhelm in that district was removed. The

¹ *The Times*, October 28, 1927.

² *Sunday Times*, November 21, 1926.

³ *Daily Telegraph*, February 17, 1928, and *Daily Herald*, February 18, 1928.

⁴ *Morning Post*, December 10, 1928.

⁵ *Ibid.*, October 10, 1929.

⁶ Date of March 5, 1930.

ban was accordingly raised and the Stahlhelm promised not to indulge in military exercises of the same kind again. At the moment of writing (October 1930) the Stahlhelms are cheerfully parading, 120,000 strong, through the streets of Coblenz, in military uniform almost indistinguishable from that of the Reichswehr, shouting: "Down with the Treaties! We want Alsace!" Their leader, Herr Seldte, in a speech has declared that for the Stahlhelm the present state of affairs was "not one of peace, but a summons to resistance and battle."¹

As to armaments, secret hoards were found again and again by the Allied Mission during the years following the War, in one case no less than 1,000 tons of war material being discovered. These were frequently concealed on the property of big landowners, in private houses, and also in the barracks of the Reichswehr.

"Germany," wrote Carl Mertens in 1928, "professes to have given up all her stocks of munitions. She is only manufacturing those said to be necessary for her army. Yet at the beginning of 1928 a transport of munitions, rifles and guns was seized. At the end of 1927 a German boat which was transporting arms was seized in a Mexican port. At the end of 1926 a German boat which was transporting Russian arms bought by Germany foundered in Stettin harbour. And this is only a question of stocks of arms discovered by chance, but how many transports of arms may occur in secret?"²

Here we touch on the most sinister of all post-war developments—the co-operation between the German Nationalists and the Bolsheviks of Russia. Alone of all Monarchist groups, the Monarchists of Germany in their dream of a war of revenge were ready to throw in their lot with the enemies of civilisation.

"It has been verified," Carl Mertens wrote again in 1928, "that there are a number of German arms factories in Russia which produce heavy arms forbidden to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. These industries obtain the financial means for their business from the Reichswehr and from the Soviet Government. The Russian Commissar Stalin thanked Germany for having made the Red Army into an efficient fighting machine. This happened in 1927."³

The German Social Democrats, the only Socialists in the world who have consistently exposed the intrigues of the pan-Germans on one side and the campaign of the Bolsheviks on the other, brought forward damning evidence on this co-

¹ *The Times and Morning Post*, October 7, 1930.

² *France Threatened by the German Sword*, ³ *Die Menschheit*, June 1, 1928.

operation between the Reichswehr and the Red Army that had come to their knowledge at the end of 1926.

In December 1926, that is to say the year after Locarno, and just after Germany's admission to the League of Nations, the Socialist deputy, Dr. Scheidemann, denounced in the Reichstag the deliveries of munitions from Russia for the German Army, the illegal manufacture of poison gas in that country for export to Germany, and the manufacture of military aircraft for the Junker Company. He declared that the Reichswehr was receiving financial support on one hand from the Bolsheviks, and was closely connected with the Monarchist organisations and big German industrialists on the other. He further stated that a special department existed in the War Office for maintaining relations with Russia, and ended by saying: "We require that this secret arming shall be stopped. We desire good relations with Russia, but they must be honourable and clean. They are neither honourable nor clean when Russia produces world revolution and at the same time arms the German Army. No more Soviet munitions for German guns."¹

These charges were confirmed by another Socialist deputy, Herr Künstler, who published in *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the Social Democratic Party, of January 11, 1927, a conversation he had held with two German workmen who had returned from Russia, where they had been employed during the first half of 1926 in a poison gas factory which the German Ministry for War had set up through its agency "Gefu." This factory was located at Trotsk on the Volga and belonged to Dr. Hugo Stoltzenberg of Hamburg, a member of the Nationalist Socialist Party (i.e. the Ludendorff and Hitler Party); it was concerned in manufacturing phosgene and "lost," known during the War as "Yellow Cross" and "Blue Cross." The workmen were controlled by German officers sent by "Gefu," and were frequently threatened by the Cheka if they revealed anything of what was going on.

Questions were asked in the House of Commons on the subject of the manufacture of poison gas in Russia, and it was noted that the British Socialists appeared to resent the disclosures made by their German comrades. The question of German complicity was, moreover, tactfully avoided, and when in the following October it transpired that two employees of the German Dye Trust (I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G.) at Offenbach had been poisoned through an escape of phosgene,

¹ *Daily Mail*, December 17, 1926.

the British public was assured that this involved no infringement of the Versailles Treaty, phosgene being required in the manufacture of dyestuffs.

Seven months later, on May 20, 1928, the world was startled by the news that Dr. Stoltzenberg's chemical factory in Hamburg—that is to say, the very company that had been running the poison gas factory at Trotsk—had suddenly exploded, with an escape of phosgene. The fumes of this gas swept the town, killing 11 people and injuring 100 more, whilst 30,000 were driven in panic from their homes.

This time the Press in Allied countries displayed some alarm, and questions were again asked in Parliament. Replying on June 11, 1928, to Sir William Davison, who had inquired whether the store of phosgene at Hamburg was not contrary to the express terms of the Peace Treaty, Mr. Locker-Lampson, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, replied that "the manufacture, storage, sale, import and export of phosgene for war purposes was forbidden," but "the manufacture of phosgene intended for industrial purposes is allowed," and he went on to say:

The facts hitherto brought to light afford no proof that the German Government has failed to ensure the observance of the conditions described above, and His Majesty's Government do not consider, therefore, that any action on their part is required. It is understood, however, that an official inquiry into the Hamburg explosion is being conducted *by the German authorities.* (My italics.)

In reply to a further question Mr. Locker-Lampson added that if there had been any infringement of the Treaty the League of Nations was entitled to hold an inquiry.

The League of Nations of course did nothing of the kind. Such was the confidence of the German authorities that the Treaty could be defied and the Allies depended on to take no action under any circumstances, that the Stoltzenberg Factory had been actually advertising the manufacture of poison gas for warfare in a Spanish magazine¹ two months before the Hamburg explosion. This advertisement, reproduced on the next page, runs as follows in English:

SUPER-POISONS

Manufacture, administration and study of all classes of chemical products destined for chemical warfare, whether offensive or defensive.

¹ *La Guerra y su Preparacion* (Ministerio de la Guerra, Madrid), March 1928.

Pistols and cartridges loaded with irritant chemical products suitable for Police, Zoological Gardens, Circuses, etc.

Apparatus for producing irritant fogs and smoke-clouds of various colours with the object of concealing tactical movements by sea as well as by land.

PROCESSES AND INVENTIONS BOUGHT

H. STOLTZENBERG

HAMBURG:

Moenckebergstrasse 19.

MADRID:

Calle Alfonso XII 56,
Apartado 493.

ULTRA VENENOS

Fabricación, manejo y aplicaciones de toda clase de productos destinados a la guerra química, tanto ofensiva como defensiva.

Pistolas y cartuchos cargados con productos químicos irritantes, adecuados para Policía, Parques Zoológicos, Circos, etc.

Botes fumígenos para producir neblinas irritantes y cortinas de humo de varios colores, con el fin de disimular movimientos tácticos terrestres y marítimos.

COMPRA DE PROCEDIMIENTOS E INVENTOS

H. STOLTZENBERG

HAMBURGO

Moenckebergstrasse, 19

MADRID

Calle Alfonso XII, 56
Apartado 493

As a result of the publicity provided by the Hamburg explosion, the German authorities proposed to sink the remaining stores of gas in the sea, but finally decided that this might be bad for the fishes, so ended by burying them in concrete vaults.

In February 1929 Dr. Stoltzenberg was again advertising, this time offering to build and finance new chemical works for the manufacture of various substances, including "phosgene, the Yellow and Blue Cross groups and tear gas."¹

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, February 5, 1929.

At the same time Soviet Russia, on the usual pretext that British Imperialism was contemplating an attack on the "Workers' Republic," increased her militarist activities. An intensification of the warlike spirit was being carried out all over Russia, working-men and the youth of the country were pressed into taking part in technical practice and manoeuvres.¹ In July 1928 the Government organised a military week of defence in which the army, working-men and all the military and civil organisations were invited to demonstrate their military skill and readiness for war.

"We call upon all the workers," said *Pravda* of July 8, "who while remaining at their lathes and ploughs, must take part in the strengthening of the U.S.S.R. by assisting in the task of mass militarism."

The manufacture of poison gas was being carried on rapidly. In answer to a question on this subject by Sir Alfred Knox in the House of Commons on March 15, 1927, the reply was made on behalf of the Government that "the study of gas warfare was being actively pursued in Soviet Russia. Numerous factories had been set up or were in course of erection which were, or would be, capable of poison-gas production on a very considerable scale. . . . There is not the slightest doubt that much greater preparations are being made in Russia than anywhere else in the world."

It was in the midst of these preparations that Litvinov in the name of the Soviet Government came forward on November 30, 1927, at the Fourth Session of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission with the proposal for complete disarmament. All land, marine and air forces were to be abolished; all weapons, military supplies, means of chemical warfare and other forms of armament to be destroyed, and all warships and military air vessels to be scrapped.

This joke at the expense of the League, which the Soviet Press had always derided, was characteristic of Bolshevik humour, and the rejection of its proposal provided the Soviet Government with an excuse for remaining outside the League as ultra-pacifist and continuing their military preparations, to which their ratification of the Protocol, prohibiting poison gas, in April 1928, presented no obstacle.

It was now the turn of Germany to make a "gesture," and on March 5, 1929, the Government of the Reich informed the Council of the League of Nations that it had decided to ratify the Bill on the Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of poison

¹ *Izvestia*, June 6, 1928.

gas in war. One seems to remember something of this kind happening before. Had not Germany appended her signature to the Hague Declaration in 1899, promising to abstain from the use of "asphyxiating or deleterious gases"? Yet this had not prevented the gas attack of April 22, 1915, which forced the Allies six months later to retaliate by the same methods. The public memory, however, is short, and the prohibition of poison gas in future on the initiative of Germany was hailed with rapture by the League of Nations.

Yet only a month later, with strange inconsequence, a proposal of the same kind was turned down by the League. On April 24, 1929, Count Bernstorff, the German delegate to the Sixth Session of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission at Geneva, came forward and solemnly proposed to prohibit the launching of bombs or weapons of any sort from aeroplanes. Lord Cushendun, who was present in the place of Sir Austen Chamberlain, reminded the Assembly that "the Hague Convention of 1907 had prohibited aerial bombardment, nevertheless it had been used during the last war. In these conditions *it seemed that prohibitions of such a kind were not of great value.*" (My italics.)¹ The proposal was accordingly rejected.

Why had the same argument not been used in the case of poison gas? Why had the worthlessness of German gestures and promises not been recognised before?

The ban on poison gas subscribed to by Germany in 1929 and by Russia in April 1928 did nothing to check its manufacture in both those countries.

In August of this year (1930) Germany was carrying out tests in gas warfare at Kaiserslautern in Bavaria.

The tests occupied three hours, and were concluded with a real gas attack, in which irritation gas was used. They were watched closely not only by the Bavarian military authorities, but also by chemical and other experts from Berlin and Hamburg.²

Again in September the inhabitants of a certain district of Berlin complained of suffering from the effects of tear gas which was being used in the training of soldiers, some of which had escaped from the premises belonging to the German Army.³

With regard to aviation, Herr Künstler in new revelations of 1928 had referred to the secret agreement between the German

¹ *The Times*, April 25, 1929.

² *Daily Telegraph*, August 26, 1930.

³ *Daily Mail*, September 10, 1930.

Ministry of Defence, the Soviet Government and the Junker works for the establishment of aircraft and aero-engine works in Soviet Russia, and when the whole question of relations between the Reichswehr and the Red Army came up in the Reichstag at that date it was admitted that the Junkers' activities in Soviet Russia had had official backing. This was said, however, to be ancient history, and the Government's relations with the Junker Company were declared to have been dissolved.¹

Die Menschheit of June 1, 1928, however, maintained that this was still going on :

It is an established fact that a number of German aeroplane factories abroad produce military aeroplanes. This applies above all to the Junker firm in Russia which provides for the Red Army. The financial means for this outlay have been supplied to Junker's by the Reichswehr and the Soviet Government. Stalin congratulated himself on the support of Germany in the aero-technic arming of the Red Army. That happened at the end of 1927. The fact was established by the Reichstag and dismissed as an isolated case.

Die Menschheit went on to enumerate further " isolated cases " of the same kind.

Fresh evidence which has recently come to light tends to confirm these assertions. During the discussions on army estimates that took place in the Reichstag last May (1930), questions by Socialist deputies elicited from the Minister for War the admission that relations between the Soviet Government and the Reichswehr existed with the cognisance of the Foreign Office. Herr Künstler again returned to the charge and declared " that secret relations between the Reichswehr and the Red Army were maintained up till recently." General Groener (War Minister) appeared much disturbed and refused to give any information on the subject. As the *Morning Post* observed on this occasion : " It is known . . . that the idea of a military alliance between Germany and the Soviets is very popular in certain German military circles. . . . The German Staff officers very often visit Soviet Russia." ² On July 21, 1930, the *Morning Post* quoted a number of utterances by German Nationalists in support of an alliance with Soviet Russia. " If ever we should march," Herr Westfallen, the leader of the militant Nationalist organisation " Werwolf,"—what about all these " patriotic " organisations having

¹ *The Times*, October 8, 1928.

² Date of June 18, 1930.

been suppressed in 1926?—said recently in Oldenburg, "if ever we should march, we would never march against Bolshevist Russia. We will conduct war not against the Bolsheviks, but in alliance with them, because this alliance would help us in realising our aims."

The death of Captain Amlinger, a German cavalry officer who was killed in the following month of August in an aeroplane crash in Russia, where he was employed as a pilot by the Soviet Government, drew public attention still further to the danger of this alliance. Even the *Daily Herald* expressed alarm, observing that this incident "will throw a flood of light on intrigues between certain German Army chiefs and the Soviet. Desperate official attempts are being made to cloak the truth. For it has always been officially denied that there are any close relations between the German Army and the Soviet."¹

The Nationalist paper, the *Lokalanzeiger*, vainly attempted to cover up the scandal by announcing that Captain Amlinger broke his neck in a horse race. But the truth was out. Captain Amlinger was found to be only one of a number of German officers then in Russia, whose names were cited by the indefatigable Herr Künstler at a meeting on September 8, and he went on to declare that German officers had collaborated with the Bolshevist military attaché in preparing the Communists' manifesto against the Young Plan and the Versailles Treaty.

Such was the condition of affairs in Germany whilst the dawn of the millennial age was being hailed at Locarno and Geneva, whilst the long war between France and Germany was being declared as ended for ever, and whilst the Kellogg Pact, "renouncing all war as an instrument of national defence," was being signed by the representatives of the Allies and of Germany amidst general emotion.

It is unnecessary to follow the course of negotiations in greater detail with regard to reparations—the appointment of still further committees, the formulation of the Young Plan for the final fixation of the war debt, the institution of the International Bank at the Hague Conference to carry out the Young Plan, more committees set up by the Hague Conference—all these may or may not settle this vexed question on which already so many abortive conferences have been held since 1918.

But one tangible result of international conferences and

¹ Date of August 29, 1930.

League of Nations Assemblies has been the evacuation of the Rhineland, for which Germany began to agitate directly the Kellogg Pact was signed. According to Article 428 of the Treaty of Versailles, the occupation of German territory by the Allies was to end on January 10, 1935, when the last zone would be evacuated, but it was stated in a Declaration signed on June 16, 1919, by Mr. Lloyd George, M. Clemenceau and President Wilson that if Germany by some date earlier than this had given proof of her goodwill and satisfactory guarantees to assure the fulfilment of her obligations, the Allies would be ready to come to an agreement for an earlier evacuation of occupied territory.

What proofs had Germany given of her goodwill or good faith that would justify this concession? The truth concerning her supposed disarmament has been shown in the foregoing pages, and in the debate that took place on the Rhineland in the House of Commons on December 3, 1928, when Sir Austen Chamberlain pointed out that Germany had not yet complied with her obligations in the matter of reparations. It should be remembered that in 1871 Germany maintained her army of occupation intact until the last penny of the indemnity she imposed on France had been paid. The continued occupation of the Rhineland in 1928 until Germany had given further proofs of her willingness to pay could not, therefore, be described as an unduly harsh proceeding. But Germany, and her friends in the League of Nations and in the Socialist parties of Great Britain and France, maintained that because she had so far discharged her annual payments under the Treaty of Versailles and the Dawes Plan, had signed the Locarno Treaty, joined the League of Nations and, finally, signed the Kellogg Pact, she should be considered to have fulfilled all her obligations, and the Rhineland should therefore be immediately evacuated. France, however, who retained some memory of former German promises and "scraps of paper,"¹ held that this was not enough and had urged that the occupation of the Rhineland should be prolonged. Under pressure from the British Government, however, M. Poincaré at the time of the

¹ The incident of the "scrap of paper," possibly unknown to the younger generation to-day, is to be found in a letter from Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey on August 8, 1914, relating an interview with the German Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, in which the last named observed that "just for a word—'neutrality'—just for a scrap of paper, Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her."—*Collected Diplomatic Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (1915), p. xii.

signing of the Kellogg Pact agreed with Herr Stresemann that the evacuation of the Rhineland should depend on the settlement of reparation payments alone, irrespective of other considerations. The Young Plan, of June 1929, was held to have finally settled this question, and the evacuation of the Rhineland by British troops was arranged to take place on September 14, 1929. The evacuation of the Third (and last) Zone by the French troops was completed on June 30, 1930.

What was the result? An instant outbreak of disorders in the Rhineland, reprisals and acts of violence against the "Separatists"—suspected of having been friendly to the French authorities—in contravention of agreements reached at the Hague Conference of January 1930 between the Allied and German authorities, a recrudescence of the militarist spirit in Germany, the planning of a fresh Nationalist "Putsch" to overthrow the Republican Government, the triumph of the National Socialist Party in the elections of September 1930, and an infuriated campaign by Hitler and his followers against the Versailles Treaty and the Young Plan.

Election Notes for Conservative Speakers, in summing up the record of the Party with regard to "world peace," points out that "Britain has led the world in disarmament," that the Conservative Government was "spending £7½ millions less on Defence in 1929-30 than the Socialist Government did in 1924-5," and that Lord Cecil—who resigned from the Cabinet in August 1927 because the Government would not go still further in the question of disarmament or consider the Geneva Protocol—himself stated: "I can only say that so far we have made a great many concessions, and we have not had many concessions in return."

All this is more consoling to Pacifists than to patriots. A more tangible contribution to the peace of Europe might be found in the *rapprochement* effected by Sir Austen Chamberlain between Great Britain and France, and further between Great Britain and Italy.

It is curious to note that whilst the Entente Powers were using every effort to conciliate Germany, the danger of antagonising Fascist Italy seemed to have been overlooked. Not only the Socialist Press of Great Britain but even constitutional organs periodically published vehement tirades against the man who had rendered inestimable service to Europe by stemming the tide of Bolshevism that in 1921 was rolling westwards. A responsible British statesman had gone out

of his way in the middle of the general strike of 1926 to make a pronouncement bracketing together Bolshevism and Fascism as being hostile to liberty.

Meanwhile France accorded hospitality to innumerable *fuori usciti* and allowed Paris to become a centre for their activities. It is a common error to regard these people as mere political *émigrés*, suffering for their convictions, the truth being that a great number are dangerous conspirators, Italian rebels against the Fascist regime who have taken advantage of their immunity from Fascist legislation to hatch plots and carry out crimes of violence not only against the representatives of their own Government, but against working-men and other peaceful citizens, simply because these happened to be Fascists. No less than thirty-four murders of this kind have taken place in France, Belgium and Luxembourg during the past few years. Yet whilst any arbitrary act, real or alleged, on the part of the Fascist Government receives the widest publicity and condemnation in respectable middle-class papers in this country, such for example as the *Manchester Guardian*, anti-Fascist outrages are either not mentioned or actually condoned. This terrorist side of anti-Fascism is in fact a part of the Bolshevik movement, and the "International Anti-Fascist League," to which a number of British and French Communists belong, is a completely Bolshevik organisation, with headquarters in Berlin.

At the same time the Grand Orient has acted as a centre of anti-Fascist activity and propaganda. The *fuori usciti* have thus had the assistance of French Freemasons in their work of embittering relations between their two countries. An eminent French statesman said last year to a leading Italian statesman words to this effect: "I, too, am in favour of good relations between Italy and France, but there are too many Masonic influences at work for us to be able for the moment to arrive at an agreement."

The Nationalists of Germany, more logical and at the same time more far-sighted than those of England or France, immediately perceived the advantage of Italian friendship, not only because Fascist theory appealed to their own ardent patriotism, but as a means for driving in another wedge between the Allies. Thus during all the peace discussions which have taken place since the War, whilst the danger of "throwing Germany into the arms of Russia" has been made the pretext for perpetual concessions on the part of the Allies, the danger of throwing Italy into the arms of Germany has been ignored.

The recent *rapprochement* between Germany and Italy, and estrangement between Italy and France, was the result of this short-sighted policy. It is, however, impossible to imagine that Signor Mussolini will ever carry out the project lately attributed to him of an alliance between Italy, Germany and Soviet Russia, which could only open the flood-gates of Bolshevism into Italy and lead to the extinction of the Fascist regime.

Any talk of such alliances might have been avoided if Great Britain and France had supported Fascism from the outset. Sir Austen Chamberlain by his friendly conversations with Signor Mussolini in 1925, 1926 and 1929, as also by his efforts to repair the injury done by his predecessors to the Entente with France, was therefore serving the best interests of his country. Bound for a moment by the spell of Locarno, carried away by the general emotion at the entry of the Germans into the Assembly of the League of Nations, Sir Austen woke again to the realities of the situation when in the following year of 1927 the Geneva Protocol was revived. "You invite us," he said, "to take for every country and for every frontier the guarantee which we have taken for one by treaty. If you ask that, you ask the impossible. . . . You do not know what you ask us. You are asking nothing less than the disruption of the British Empire. I yield to no one in my devotion to this great League of Nations, but not even for this League of Nations will I destroy that smaller but older league of which my own country was the birthplace and of which it remains the centre."

Had not clear-sighted statesmen foreseen the peril of this divided allegiance from the beginning? In the House of Lords on July 22, 1920, Lord Sydenham had declared :

We have already . . . the British Family of Nations which is now being assailed by an organised conspiracy of long standing. We have seen the deadly effects of propaganda. . . . By means of propaganda the League might become a centre of dangerous intrigue against the British Empire.

Indeed, it was obvious that if England, the head of a vast Empire, were to subordinate herself to the decisions of an international body, comprising every small and insignificant state, all those who envied her greatness and desired her downfall would be provided with the opportunity to attack her at many points. If, moreover, Powers bent on her destruction were to be enrolled in the League, or, as in the case of Soviet Russia—at the Fourth Session of the Preparatory Disarmament Com-

mission—admitted to her discussions and allowed to spread their influence amongst the representatives of the Nations, it was easy to see that the League might in time become simply a League of Nations against the British Empire.

It was not that those who foresaw all these possibilities were any less desirous of peace than those who cherished illusions as to what the League could do, but that they recognised its impotence to enforce its decisions in the cause of peace. As long as two great Powers cherish schemes of aggression and subscribe to the principle that "Might is Right," the councils of the Nations may sit for ever in Geneva outlawing war—the ultimate appeal must be to force. The League itself perceived some glimmer of this stern truth during the incident related in the foregoing pages when, in connection with Germany's proposal to prohibit aerial warfare, the futility of her earlier promises was recalled. It was the one occasion when the members of the League themselves saw, through the mists of idealism, the grim facts of life confronting them, and acted on this rare and sudden realisation. The conclusion then reached embodies the whole case against the League. What was the good of promises or prohibitions that had been violated so lightly in the past? What was the good of inviting the Powers that had violated them to join the League of Nations? What, indeed, was the good of the League of Nations as a means of civilising, still less of averting, warfare?

To-day even the most optimistic would hardly maintain that the League has fulfilled the hopes that gathered around it at its birth, or justified the immense sums spent on it. As the guardian of the world's peace, its impotence will only be seen if the nations bent on war again muster their forces in a determined attack on the peoples who have surrendered their means of defence. Then, amidst the roll of drums and the roar of cannon, the house of cards so laboriously constructed on the shores of Lac Léman will fall, not with a crash, but with the flutter of innumerable scraps of paper, silently to the ground.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SURRENDER TO SWARAJ

It would be outside the scope of this book to enter on the vast question of Imperial relations all over the world—with Canada, Australia, South Africa and the other Dominions colonised by the Anglo-Saxon race. The aspect of the situation that concerns us here is the attempt to undermine the Empire by agitation amongst the indigenous populations under British rule in Eastern countries, particularly by the agents of Soviet Russia.

At the point where the Indian question was last touched on—the date of the resignation of Mr. Montagu in 1922—Nationalist agitation seemed to have been brought to an end by the firm action of Lord Lloyd in suppressing sedition and arresting Gandhi. The “reforms” introduced by the Montagu-Chelmsford regime—the establishment of Provincial Councils, enlargement of the National Assembly, etc.—were thenceforth carried out according to plan, and no pretext was offered for renewing the campaign of Satyagraha or Non-Co-operation.

But in the background Moscow was watching and maturing its plans for the overthrow of British rule in India.

The principal agent of the Bolsheviks was a certain Bengali Brahmin, Manabendra Nath Roy, who had been arrested in India for revolutionary activities during the early part of the War. In 1915 Roy absconded from his bail, and made his way to the Far East and from there to America. In 1920 he left Mexico and entered the Eastern department of the Komintern. Together with Sheffik and Ashtaria, he represented India at the Second World Congress of the Third International in Moscow in August 1920, on which occasion he submitted a thesis in which these words occur :

England—the bulwark of Imperialism—has been suffering from over production for more than a century. Without large colonial

possessions indispensable as a market for her goods and at the same time supplying her with raw materials, the capitalist regime in England would have long ago succumbed under its own weight. . . . The separation of the colonies, together with the proletarian revolution at home, will overthrow the capitalist regime in Europe. . . . In most colonies there exist now organised revolutionary parties working in close contact with the working masses. The Communist parties must get in touch with the revolutionary movement in the colonies through these parties and groups, etc.¹

In a manifesto to the Indian National Congress two years later Roy put forward a completely Marxist view and showed how the Nationalist movement was to be utilised for the purpose :

The struggle of the Indian people for freedom is an integral part of the struggle of the international proletariat against capitalist domination, in that its success would break down one of the strongholds of capitalism. The revolutionary Nationalists of India should therefore, not only join hands with the Indian workers and the peasants, but should establish close relations with the advanced proletariat of the world. The Communists will fight side by side with the revolutionary Nationalists, and will be found always in the front ranks.²

This plan for the destruction of British power in India had, as has been shown earlier in this book, been actively pursued by Germany during the War, and still in 1921 the activities of German agents were almost indistinguishable from those of Moscow. It is not without significance to find that after his return to Europe, Roy ended by taking up his abode in Germany and eventually became head of the Berlin Bureau for Bolshevik propaganda in the East.

By 1924 Communism had made sufficient headway for an Indian Communist Party to be established at Cawnpore, and in the spring of the same year the first evidence of its activities was discovered in what was known as the "Cawnpore Conspiracy" in which four men—Muzuffar Ahmed, Usmani, Dange and N. K. Gupta—were found to be plotting with Roy to bring about revolution in India. It is noteworthy that Mr. Richards, Under-Secretary for India under the Labour Government of that date, stated in Parliament :

I would like to make it clear that the accused persons are not being prosecuted merely for holding Communist views or carrying on

¹ *Stenographic Report of the Second Congress of the Komintern*, pp. 122-6.

² *Morning Post*, March 23, 1925.

Communist propaganda. They are charged with having conspired to secure by violent revolution the complete separation of India from Imperialistic Britain, and in that endeavour they formed and attempted to make use of a Workers' and Peasants' Association in India.¹

It was therefore interesting to find that the subscription list for the defence of the conspirators stood in the name of a leading member of the Labour Party.

The *tendresse* entertained for the disciples of the Bolsheviks in India by certain of the Labour Party was further evinced in the following year. Roy, now leader of the Indian Communist Party, had been expelled from France for his revolutionary activities, and a meeting of protest was held in Paris at which Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., was present to represent the British Socialists.²

From 1926 to 1927 Communism became more active in India. In December 1925 the first All-India Communist Conference was held in Madras under the presidency of Singaravelu, one of the accused in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. In 1926 a number of so-called "Workers' and Peasants' Parties," in reality entirely Bolshevik organisations, were started by a certain George Allison, alias Donald Campbell, a member of the British Communist Party. Allison was followed by Philip Spratt, a Cambridge graduate and member of the C.P.G.B. and Minority Movement, who arrived in Bombay in December 1926 as a delegate from the Labour Research Department, and helped to carry on the work of organising the Workers' and Peasants' Parties. A further emissary from England was Benjamin Francis Bradley, a member of the A.E.U. (Amalgamated Engineering Union), who arrived in Bombay in September 1927.

On November 1 following a widespread plot, known as the Deoghar Conspiracy, was discovered, having again for its object the overthrow of the British Raj by means of armed revolution. The conspiracy, carried out by twenty youths, mostly Bengalis, proved not to be formidable, but it was symptomatic of the forces at work. The serious results of revolutionary propaganda were not seen until the following year of 1928, when a series of strikes took place. This began in April with strikes in the Bombay mills, in the Howrah and Lilloah railway workshops, and later on the South Indian Railway. In July the Bardoli No-tax Campaign was carried out by Vallabhai Patel.

¹ Debate in Parliament, May 19, 1924. ² *Morning Post*, March 23, 1925.

This agitation, though ostensibly industrial, was directly inspired by Communist agents. Spratt took an active part both in the Lilloah railway strike and the jute workers' strike in Bengal. Bradley became the treasurer of the Joint Strike Committee during the Bombay textile strike. In September H. L. Hutchinson, another British Communist, arrived from Germany and was made Vice-President of the Great India Peninsula Railwaymen's Union. He was also elected a Vice-President of the *Girni Kamgar* or Red Flag Union, a new Bolshevik organisation formed during the Bombay textile strike under the presidency of A. A. Alwe, a textile operative, which by the end of the year was said to comprise 60,000 members.

Meanwhile money had been sent continually from Moscow to the strike leaders ; in May it was publicly announced that £1,575 had been sent through the Deutsche Bank in Berlin to N. M. Joshi, President of the Bombay Textile Union, to finance the mill strike, and Joshi admitted that this was not the first sum he had received. In August a sum of £5,500 was sent by Tomskey ; on September 5, S. H. Jhabwalla, leader of the Bombay mill strike, received £1,000 from Moscow. Help was also sent to Mitra, the Communist leader of the Calcutta railway strike. According to the Indian paper, *The Statesman*, nine-tenths of the total income of the Indian Trades Union Congress in the preceding year came from Moscow. *The Statesman* confessed itself puzzled as to the policy of the British Government in allowing Soviet Russia to remit these sums through British banks in order to foment agitation. At the same time it should be noted that contributions were also sent to the Lilloah strikers by the I.F.T.U. (International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam) and to the Howrah strikers by the British T.U.C., so that once again Communists and Socialists were seen to be acting in concert.

At last the Government of India was roused to action. Roy, who in the spring of the preceding year had been in Hankow helping to stir up revolution in China, at the end of the year addressed a manifesto to the Central Committee of the Indian Communist Party, calling on them to conduct propaganda amongst the peasants and workers in order to overthrow Capitalism in India. This inflammatory discourse was published on August 18, 1928, whilst the strike movement was at its height, and on August 24 the Government announced its intention of dealing with the Communist menace by a Public Safety Bill, under which Bolshevik agents, other than

Indian or British subjects, should be deported. This very moderate measure, though solidly supported by the Moslems in the Legislative Assembly, was opposed by the Hindus, dominated by the Pandit Motilal Nehru, and was finally rejected by the casting vote of the President, Vithalbai Javerbai Patel, brother of Vallabhai Patel, leader of the Bardoli No-tax Campaign. The Bill was not passed until matters had reached a further stage and several acts of violence had been committed—the attempt to blow up the train conveying the Simon Commission from Bombay to Poona, on October 7 of the same year; a furious riot of cotton mill strikers in Bombay on December 12, in which three native constables were killed; the murder of Mr. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police, four days later at Lahore, where a bomb factory was discovered.

The Government then introduced a new Public Safety Bill on February 7, 1929, which passed this time by a majority of one vote. This was followed by the sensational arrest of thirty-one Communists from all over India on March 20, on a charge of conspiracy and "waging war against the King." These men, brought to justice in the Meerut Conspiracy Trial still proceeding (November 1930), included Bradley, Spratt—Hutchinson was arrested three months later—and the leading Indian members of the Girmi Kamgar Union: the President A. A. Alwe, the Vice-Presidents S. H. Jhabwalla, R. S. Nimkar, the General Secretary, S. A. Dange, the Assistant Secretary K. N. Joglekar, and the Treasurer S. V. Ghate. Three of the thirty-one—Dange, Shaukat Usmani and Muzuffar Ahmed—had been sentenced in the Cawnpore Conspiracy trial five years earlier, and were also leading members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party that now served as a camouflage for the Communist Party, and to which the greater number of the accused belonged. A very representative group had thus been rounded up, but a number of dangerous conspirators had still been left at large, and a further outrage took place on April 8 at Delhi. The Legislative Assembly had just passed the new Trade Disputes Act and was about to begin a discussion on the Public Safety Bill, when two bombs were thrown, from the gallery into the midst of the Government benches, injuring four members. The perpetrators of the crime, arrested on the spot, were found to be paid agents of a Communist organisation—Bhagat Singh, a Punjabi, and Butukeshwara Datt, a Bengali.

This led to a further round-up, and on July 10 sixteen con-

spirators, including Bhagat Singh and Datt, were brought to trial at Lahore on the charges including those of being implicated in the murder of Mr. Saunders, of conspiracy against the King, of organising a revolutionary army, of manufacturing and throwing bombs, and of further plots to murder officials. The revolutionary army referred to appears to have been the "Hindustan Socialist Republican Army," known as the "Hindustani Seva Dal Volunteer Corps of the All-Indian National Congress," organised on a military basis and affiliated to the League against Imperialism.

Throughout the whole of this period the hand of Moscow had been clearly visible. The All-India Trade Union Congress had affiliated with the League against Imperialism in December 1928, and four avowed Communists were elected to its Executive. By the order of Moscow on June 12, 1929, even the most extreme Nationalist leaders were to be removed; affiliation with the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat was also ordered. In March *Pravda* had declared that the battles in India "are now part of the World Revolution, led, organised and watched over by the Communist International"; in July it devoted eight columns to an analysis of the position in India, showing that Moscow was not only heavily subsidising the revolutionary movement there, but maintaining its own spies and agents, and again admitting that it was out to destroy British power in India.

The advent of the Labour Party to office in June 1929 did nothing to moderate the streams of invective poured out against the Government of Great Britain in the Soviet Press, and one is again led to wonder why Moscow should display this hatred of a Party that had done so much to further its aims. Its representatives in Parliament and its official organ, the *Daily Herald*, acted consistently as its advocates whenever the Soviet regime met with condemnation in any other quarter; the leaders of the Party were on the best of terms with the representatives of the Soviet in London, seeing them off, as has been said, with tears and embraces when these worthies were driven out by the Tory Government, and ever since that fateful spring of 1927 the Labour Party had never ceased to press for a renewal of diplomatic relations, even incorporating this demand in its election programme.

As to India, no body of people had done more than the Labour Party to hasten the realisation of Moscow's principal aim, severance from the British Empire, though publicly advocating only the first step to this end, self-government or

Home Rule. In this task it had been ably seconded by the Theosophical Society, whose leading members were large shareholders in the Victoria House Printing Company by which their official organ, the *Daily Herald*, was produced, and who habitually provided a platform for advocates of Indian "Home Rule." The following passage from a pamphlet by Mrs. Besant herself conveys some idea of the hatred entertained by this group for men who stood for the honour of the British Raj :

Consider the writings of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, of Lord Sydenham and other returned Anglo-Indians, blinded with having wielded autocratic power, and accustomed to ignore common human rights . . . these and other returned officials and non-officials are poisoning the once healthy life of Britain and lowering the tone of British life.¹

This phraseology is curiously reminiscent of the epithets of "brigands" and "ragamuffins" applied by the revolutionaries of France in 1792 to the law-abiding elements in the crowds who dared to call out "Vive le Roi !"

Besides receiving support from the Theosophists, the *Daily Herald* was also partly maintained with Indian money, principally Hindu, a circumstance which led to an amusing situation in 1921 when that organ, after applauding the Moplah rising as a revolt against the British Raj, suddenly discovered that the Moplahs, who were Moslems, had also been killing Hindus, and hastily dropped the subject. More recently it appears that Moslem agitators recognised the utility of winning the *Daily Herald's* support, for at the moment of writing (November 1930) Mahommed Ali—one of the two famous Ali brothers mentioned earlier in this book—has publicly admitted at the Round Table Conference that he helped to stabilise financially the *Daily Herald*.²

The real relations existing between the leaders of the Labour Party and the Indian revolutionaries was shown by an incident that took place two years ago.

An old Nationalist agitator, Lala Lajpat Rai, had been deported from India for sedition in 1907, and spent his time in America during the War, helping the German and Indian revolutionaries to stir up trouble against the British. At the instance of Colonel Wedgwood he had been allowed by

¹ *Reaction of Autocracy in England*, by Annie Besant, D.L., published in Madras, p. 6.

² *The Times*, November 20, 1930.

Mr. Montagu to return to India unconditionally after the War. Lajpat Rai at once resumed his anti-British agitation, and was at least twice convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. On August 27, 1928, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that he had made a slashing attack on Mr. Tom Johnston, Labour Member for Dundee, and went on to say :

He [Lala Lajpat Rai] then proceeds to trounce Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. J. H. Thomas, and Mr. Snowden as Imperialists who, like Mr. Johnston, do not know the rudiments of Socialism, and are only disguised wolves who want to help the Empire to subjugate other nations.

This was, of course, calculated to inspire the British public with confidence in the leaders of the Labour Party as the defenders of Imperial interests. Three months later, however, Lajpat Rai died, and the following comments appeared in the *Daily Herald* :

" I am very much shocked at hearing of the death of my very old friend Lala Lajpat Rai," said Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to a representative of the Indian News Service, " he was the most single-minded Indian I have ever known. I am very, very sorry to hear of his death. It is a great loss to India ! " Colonel Wedgwood exclaimed : " A good man gone ! I feel it as a personal loss. India can ill spare a leader of the type of Lala Lajpat Rai at this critical time in her history." ¹

It would therefore be a mistake to conclude that because the Labour Party has frequently met with abuse from Indian revolutionaries, no real understanding has existed between them, just as it would be a mistake to suppose that because the Labour Party and Indian Nationalists alike are the constant objects of Soviet invective, either can be regarded as bulwarks against Bolshevism. Indeed, these apparent hostilities between so-called Extremists and Moderates serve to advance the aim both have in view, by inspiring public confidence in the character of the Moderates and enabling them to carry out their plans with impunity.

The Labour Party's policy of " full self-government and self-determination for India," put forward at its Annual Conference in 1927, was in perfect harmony with the Indian Nationalists' demands and far more calculated than the futile violence of the British Communists or the bomb throwing of the Girni Kamgar, to bring about the realisation of Moscow's

¹ Date of November 19, 1928.

great scheme—the overthrow of British rule in India. This was, indeed, the ultimate goal admitted by the Pandit Motilal Nehru, leader of the National Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly, during his visit to England at the end of 1927. The Indian people, he declared, “desired unrestricted freedom,” and he went on to say that “a period of transition must, in his opinion, precede the complete independence of India; and the Swarajists were prepared to accept Dominion status, because it carried with it the right of complete severance from the British Empire.”

After his visit to England Motilal Nehru, together with his son Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the “Young Indian Party,” attended a Conference of the League against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels.

The origins of this organisation were given in the earlier chapter of this book, entitled “The Surrender to Sinn Fein,” where it was shown that the plan of rallying all the enemies of the British Empire in the East had been carried out by the Germans through the association known as the V.V.V. or League of Oppressed Peoples, working in conjunction with the German-Irish Society, and it was stated that in January 1920 a joint meeting of the two bodies took place at the house of Count Reventlow, attended by a number of seditious Turks, Egyptians and Indians, at which a plan was drawn up for an International League against British and French Imperialism. Moscow now began to take an interest in the movement, the headquarters of which, however, remained in Berlin, and it was here that on February 10, 1926, it came into the open under the name of the “League against Colonial Oppression.” This date, on which a Congress was held in conjunction with the W.I.R. (Workers’ International Relief), which also had, and still has, its headquarters in Berlin, has been regarded as the date of foundation of the League. In reality, as has been shown, its origins went a great deal further back, and the Congress of February 10, 1926, constituted merely a reorganisation of the League more directly under the auspices of Moscow. The W.I.R., “League against Atrocities in Syria” and the “German League of Civil Rights,” which took part in this Congress, were in fact avowedly Communist bodies, and the newly organised “League against Colonial Oppression” was duly entered in the register of the Third International as one of the “sympathising mass organisations” for carrying out its propaganda.

In 1927 the League became “The League against Colonial

Oppression and Imperialism," with headquarters still in Berlin. A Congress was held at Brussels on February 10, 1927, which was attended by delegates from all over the world, welcomed by Henri Barbusse, the founder of Clarté. Amongst the British delegates were Fenner Brockway, chairman of the I.L.P., Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Harry Pollitt, A. MacManus and Helen Crawford of the C.P.G.B. (Communist Party of Great Britain), etc.

On April 14, 1927, it was decided at a meeting of members of the League, which took place in a committee-room of the House of Commons, to form a British section. Mr. Fenner Brockway was elected chairman, Mr. Lansbury treasurer, and R. O. Bridgeman (of the Chinese Information Bureau) provisional secretary. Further meetings were held in the House, at which W. C. Rust, leader of the Young Communist League, and Mrs. Helen Crawford were present, so that the Second International (Labour Socialist International) seemed to be justified in describing the League as a "Communist manoeuvre." In this movement it will be seen, then, that Socialists and Communists were inextricably mixed, for the British Socialists, always the most extreme section of the Second International, joined up with the Communists in the common cause of disrupting the British Empire.

At a further Congress of the League, which took place in Brussels from December 9 to 11, 1927, the name was again changed to the "League against Imperialism." This was the Congress attended by the two Nehrus after their visit to England. Other delegates from India were Clemens Dutt and Chattopadhyaya; England was represented by Helen Crawford, R. O. Bridgeman, Ellen Wilkinson, Saklatvala, Fenner Brockway, S. O. Davies and others, including James Maxton, who later became President of the League; France by Henri Barbusse, Herclot, André Berthon and Victor Margueritte, etc.; Germany by Ernst Toller, Willi Münzenberg (leader of the W.I.R.), Ledebour and Professor Einstein, etc.; Japan by Sen Katayama, etc.; China by a group of eight, which included Eugen Chen and Madame Sun Yat Sen.

The report on India was made by the Pandit Motilal Nehru, and a resolution was passed protesting against a Parliamentary Commission for the study of autonomy in India, against the support given by the workers to the Imperialist Government, and demanding the formation of an Indian Constituent Assembly.

The Nehrus, having thus received their marching orders in

Berlin, returned to India—paying a visit to Moscow on their way—and summoned a committee, known as the "All Parties Conference," to draw up a Constitution for India; at the same time they embarked on a campaign against the Commission under Sir John Simon, which had been appointed on November 25, 1927, in agreement with all three Parties in Parliament to inquire into the working of the present Indian Constitution as revised by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, and to report on the possibility of further extending the principle of self-government. It will be seen, then, how faithfully the Nehrus carried out their task.

The Report of the All Parties Conference, known as the "Nehru Report," demanding full Dominion Status, published on August 10, 1928, was taken in certain quarters to indicate a spirit of moderation, but in the light of Motilal Nehru's observation, quoted above, that Dominion Status was only to be accepted "because it carried with it the right of complete severance from the British Empire," this apparent moderation is seen to have been only a tactical manoeuvre. The *Daily Herald* accorded the Report its heartiest approval:

Certainly the Labour Movement in this country will welcome this striking declaration, for it is in line with the policy of self-determination consistently pressed for by Labour Party Conferences;

and it went on to observe that:

there is obviously in India to-day a real desire to take practical steps towards ending the domination of Great Britain, etc.

The Swarajists now proceeded to threats, and Gandhi declared that if the Government by the end of 1929 had not accepted the Dominion Status Constitution embodied in the Nehru Report in its entirety, a new campaign of "non-co-operation and non-payment of taxes"—i.e. of "civil disobedience"—would be organised. The National Congress, dominated by the extreme elements, passed the resolution on December 31, 1928.

This ultimatum brought matters to a crisis, and the Viceroy found himself obliged to "take notice." Lord Irwin, who—as Mr. Edward Wood, Minister of Agriculture and a personal friend of Mr. Baldwin—was appointed to the Viceroyalty in October 1925, had been engaged ever since that date in the conflicting tasks of striving to maintain law and order whilst helping to prepare India for "self-government."

The trouble in this case, as in that of the Peace Treaties, of the Palestine Mandate and of so many other post-war commitments, lay in the vagueness of the formulas employed. India was to be led towards self-government, but when and under what conditions it was to attain this goal was nowhere indicated, and the impatience of those who said "To-day" naturally conflicted with the caution of those who relegated that consummation to some dim and distant future. At any rate, these years of 1928-9, when India was in the throes of revolutionary agitation; when renewed strikes and riots were again taking place in Bombay; when Hindus were attacking Moslems and clashes occurring between Moslems and Sikhs; when bombs were flying in Delhi; when the Lahore Conspiracy trial, then proceeding, had revealed still further the extent of Bolshevik intrigue—self-government seemed about as easy of attainment as a chorus of "community singing" in the Tower of Babel.

Placed in this dilemma, Lord Irwin vainly endeavoured to assert his authority by warning the Swarajists of the danger of carrying out their threat of civil disobedience, whilst at the same time reiterating his allegiance to the Montagu-Chelmsford policy. Finally, in June 1929, he sailed for England to consult with the Labour Government, which had just come into office, on the steps to be taken to deal with the chaotic situation which had arisen.

As usual, that strange body of opinion which, under each Government in turn, directs the foreign policy of this country, decided that the only remedy lay in further concessions. The Labour Party, who were, of course, for unconditional surrender, needed no urging in this direction and here unfortunately met with support from a more responsible quarter. The incident which precipitated the crisis, and over which a storm of controversy raged in the Press, seems, as far as can be discovered from the conflicting versions published, to have been briefly as follows. The Simon Commission, having pursued its course throughout India amidst stonings and boycotts, had returned to England and was engaged in drawing up its Report. Sir John Simon now judged it necessary to ask for an extension of the field the Commission was to investigate so as to bring the Indian States if possible into the scheme, and addressed a letter to this effect to the Prime Minister. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in replying quite gratuitously added a paragraph in favour of Dominion Status. According to the *Daily Mail*, Lord Irwin then went to Aix-les-Bains to consult

Mr. Baldwin, with a view to making a declaration on these lines on his return to India. Mr. Baldwin expressed his agreement with the paragraph in question, and pledged both himself and his party without consulting them. But this proved to be incorrect. What apparently happened was that on September 20 the secretary of Mr. Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State, took the correspondence between Sir John Simon and Mr. MacDonald to Mr. Baldwin at Bourges and asked him to concur with the paragraph on Dominion Status as the basis of a Declaration by Lord Irwin *in the event of the Simon Commission being consulted and agreeing*, and the consent of the other parties being obtained. Mr. Baldwin replied that, as far as he was concerned, he concurred. He could not speak for his colleagues as they were scattered, but he added that if the other concurrences were obtained, he would do his best to persuade them to take his view.

Now, according to Mr. Wedgwood Benn's statement in the House on November 1, the Simon Commission were not consulted in the matter; according to his further statements on November 7, the Simon Commission were, however, informed of the proposed declaration and expressed strong dissent. The Liberals were also consulted, and in their turn expressed the opinion that it would be ill-advised. At any rate, when Mr. Baldwin met his Shadow Cabinet on October 23 he found, for the first time, that the Simon Commission did not approve and that his colleagues were also opposed to the plan. Mr. Baldwin accordingly wrote to Mr. Wedgwood Benn, withdrawing his approval, and the Conservative leaders addressed an emphatic protest to the Government. Mr. Wedgwood Benn had, however, already arranged with the Viceroy for the declaration to be made, and the Conservative protest arrived too late to prevent Lord Irwin from communicating it privately to certain political leaders in India. Lord Irwin, therefore, felt himself committed, and on November 1 published a declaration of policy in which he pointed out that until the Report of the Simon Commission had been laid before Parliament "it was impossible, and even if it were possible," it would "clearly be improper to forecast the nature of any constitutional changes that may subsequently be proposed." But he went on to say:

In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the statute of 1919 [i.e. Mr. Montagu's Reform Scheme known as the Government

of India Act], I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 [Mr. Montagu's speech in the House on August 20, 1917] that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status.

This pronouncement raised a storm of controversy in Parliament and the Press. The Rothermere organs accused Mr. Baldwin of making commitments to the Socialists behind the backs of his colleagues; the official Conservative Press exonerated him and blamed Mr. Wedgwood Benn and the Socialist Government for going behind the Simon Commission in authorising a premature announcement of policy which both Conservatives and Liberals agreed in characterising as imprudent. Lord Brentford and Lord Birkenhead, indeed, denounced it in unmeasured terms as certain to prove disastrous.

The declaration was, of course, entirely in accordance with Socialist ideas, yet in justice to the "Labour" Party it is necessary to remember that the sentiments it embodied met with the full approval of the Conservative leader and his personal friend Lord Irwin. The continuity of foreign policy pursued since the War by succeeding Governments in this country was never better illustrated than in the message sent "to the people of India" by Mr. Lansbury on October 31:

I appeal to my Indian comrades and friends to keep in mind the fact that it is a Viceroy appointed by a Conservative Government who now speaks on behalf of a British Labour Government, which proves that in this matter there is, in fact, no division of opinion and no shadow of disagreement between those of us on this side and the highest authorities on the other on the great question of India's right to self-government.

The reply of the "Indian comrades" to the gesture of Lord Irwin was a statement signed by a number of the Nationalist leaders, including Gandhi, the two Nehrus, and Mrs. Besant, expressing appreciation of "the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion," and demanding a Conference, in which the Congress extremists were to have a majority, to evolve a scheme for a Dominion constitution, to be preceded by the immediate release of all political prisoners. At the same time the Nationalist vernacular papers came out with headlines such as "Broken Pledges in British Rule," "Vain Declaration by the Viceroy," etc., and their orators boasted

that their campaign of *satyagraha*, or civil disobedience, had forced the British Raj into submission.

The violent elements in the Nationalist camp replied more forcibly by placing a bomb on the rails outside Delhi with the object of blowing up the Viceroy's train, which was carrying him on December 23 to a meeting with Gandhi and other Nationalist leaders. The plot, however, failed in its effect.

A week later, from December 27-31, the famous meeting of the National Congress took place in Lahore where, under the influence of the extreme elements, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Srinivasa Iyengar and others, a Declaration of Independence was drawn up and passed by a large majority, and the British flag was torn down and burnt. In the wording of this resolution it was stated that :

In pursuance of the resolution passed at the Calcutta Congress last year, this Congress now declares that Swaraj in the Congress creed shall mean complete independence. It therefore further declares the Nehru Scheme to have lapsed, and hopes that all parties in Congress will devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence.

What more could Moscow or Berlin desire? Indeed, Srinivasa Iyengar, who had visited Moscow in the preceding year, had, as he told the Legislative Assembly, returned convinced of the excellence of the Soviet system, whilst the opening speech of Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lahore Congress, in which he declared for a Socialist Republic, met with frantic applause from the assembled delegates.

The Nationalists, with the League against Imperialism at their back, could now be depended on to carry on the revolutionary movement to a successful issue, and Moscow could afford to dispense with its avowed agents. This same December it was announced in the Bolshevik Press that Roy had been expelled from the Third International, and the only "Red" elements, bereft of their principal link with Moscow, as well as of their leaders now in Meerut jail, found themselves no match for the better organised forces of the Nationalists. In a clash between the Girni Kamgar Union and Gandhi's followers on January 26, 1930, the red flaggers came off the worst, and the Nationalist banners, bearing such inscriptions as "Long live the Revolution" and "British Rule means Massacres," were carried in triumph through the streets of Bombay.

Gandhi had already, on January 9, drawn up his plans for

a fresh campaign of "civil disobedience." "The time must come when there may be a fight to a finish with one's back to the wall," he wrote in *Young India*. By the end of February his plans, which a supine Government had given him two months to mature, were complete. On March 4 his ultimatum to the Viceroy was delivered by a young Englishman, Reginald Reynolds, who had just appeared on the scene and described himself as "a born revolutionary," trained in an international school on the outskirts of Birmingham.

"Dear Friend," this missive began, "before embarking upon civil disobedience and taking the risk which I have dreaded all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out. My personal faith is absolutely clear. I hold British rule to be a curse, but I do not intend to harm a single Englishman," etc.

What way out the Mahatma proposed, other than the immediate abdication of the British Government, is nowhere discoverable from the rest of the letter. The Viceroy, however, seemed indisposed to avail himself of this exit, and replied briefly through his secretary to "Dear Mr. Gandhi" that he regretted to hear of the "course of action" indicated in the letter.

Lord Irwin was now finding his dual rôle more than ever difficult. To continue paving the way for self-government in a country where the would-be governors were busily engaged in destroying all the machinery of law and order, was a task calculated to daunt the heart of the most confirmed idealist. The loyal elements looked on in dismay. "The British people," said a Moslem leader at this crisis, "have wasted enough time parleying with their enemies. Surely the day has come to remember their friends." But in India, as in England, it was the loud-voiced, the disaffected, the rebellious, who must be conciliated and cajoled, whilst the law-abiding were left out in the cold. Faced with what it conceived to be its duty, maintaining order and at the same time pressing reforms on people who no longer desired them but clamoured for complete independence, the Government adopted an alternating policy, one day sympathising with the "legitimate aspirations" of the Swarajists, the next throwing them into jail for sedition and conspiracy. On January 23 Subhas Chandra Bose and eleven other Nationalist leaders had been arrested and imprisoned on this charge; on March 10 Sen Gupta, the Swarajist Mayor of Calcutta, was arrested and sentenced to ten days' imprisonment for making seditious

speeches in Rangoon. On April 4 he was out again and calling for a general strike in Calcutta.

Meanwhile Gandhi was not arrested, but allowed to start with seventy of his followers on his 150-mile march from Ahmedabad to Dandi, on the coast, where he was to launch his campaign of "civil disobedience" by a no-tax movement, the infringement of the Government salt monopoly, a boycott of all Government officials, etc. The Moslem leaders held aloof from these proceedings, the "Untouchables" even came out and attacked the procession as it neared its goal, but the Government offered no resistance and actually facilitated the dispatch of messages from Gandhi to his supporters by sending a special official with him on his march to ensure the rapid transmission of his instructions through the Government telegraphs.

The march was carried out according to plan; Gandhi amidst shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!" (Long live Mahatma Gandhi!) entered the sea at Dandi; the ridiculous "salt-making" began. Then suddenly the authorities "took notice": the police raided Congress headquarters on April 10, arrested the secretary and the "Commander of the National Militia," rounded people up all over India, rearrested Sen Gupta, arrested Jawaharlal Nehru, who wired to Gandhi: "I have stolen a march on you. Love. Jawaharlal." Gandhi's bid for martyrdom had not yet succeeded. But the affair which had proceeded hitherto on the lines of comedy now developed into tragedy. Savage rioting broke out in Calcutta, a raid accompanied by the murder of British officials and every form of violence was made on the armouries of Chittagong, loyal Indian police were massacred and burned by brutal mobs at Sholapur; the Afridis descended from the hills and Peshawar burst into flame. As Gandhi peacefully observed to *The Times* correspondent: "Non-violent and violent movements always go hand in hand."

Then and then only, when India was in a blaze from end to end, the Viceroy took alarm and resolved on firmer action. On April 27 he revived the Press Act of 1910—repealed in 1922—dealing with seditious newspapers; on May 5 Gandhi was arrested. His successors to the leadership, the aged Abbas Tyabji and Mrs. Naidu, then the Pandit Motilal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel, followed him into imprisonment later.

It is unnecessary to continue further the long story of lootings and burnings, of marching crowds, of fighting, bombing, killing, and of spasmodic repression and arrests carried

out with the utmost gallantry and patience by the sorely-tried police and armed forces, which threw all India into the turmoil from which she has not emerged to-day. It was the story of all weak administrations from the French Revolution onward—lack of faith on the part of governors in their right to govern, a free hand given to agitators, the law-abiding sacrificed to the lawless, abortive efforts to placate the implacable alternating with sudden displays of authority that enraged the maddened multitudes. As a Sikh gentleman of position observed in a letter to Sir Michael O'Dwyer :

The things are changed in India, and it seems to me that the Government has lost their heads and act as a puzzled body, not judging the circumstances rightly. They first hesitate to take any necessary action in time as they are afraid, and it emboldens the mischief-makers, and then all of a sudden they blindly use tons of strength, while they could have used a pound of strength, if used in time.

In a word, they allowed matters to go too far before they called a halt. By that time the situation was irretrievably out of hand. Mr. Arthur Moore, a member of the Legislative Assembly, declared in a letter to the *Statesman* on August 14 :

The Government only realised that the situation was serious at the end of April. By that time the heather was ablaze. In January the whole movement could have been locked up in one railway carriage. To-day the gaols will not hold the volunteers. In that four months the impetus was gained, the damage done. The powerful minority which voted against Mr. Gandhi at Lahore went over to him months ago, convinced by Government inaction that he was on the road to success and that independence was the true cry.

The stars may fall from Heaven, but the judgment of history will be that the men who, being called upon to keep the Crown's trust, stood idly by while revolution was begun, failed in their duty. Their thoughts were not set on law and order, on protecting the simple citizen, the victim, the villager. They were playing politics, idealistic politics if you like, but politics. . . ."

The trouble with these idealists was, again, not their ideals, but their disinclination to face realities. On one side were the Indian revolutionaries, inflamed with hatred against the British, backed by Britain's enemies outside India ; on the other side were the interests of Great Britain, to which the retention of India as a component part of the Empire was a

vital necessity. To reconcile the two was an impossibility. The British had either "to govern or get out." Courage and honesty were the two qualities needed for dealing with the situation, and the attempt to placate the Swarajists by the pretence that the British were in India in order "to prepare the people for self-government"—carrying with it the implication that as soon as the lesson had been learnt, the British would relinquish all control—was neither honest nor courageous.

The British are not in India for purely philanthropic reasons; they are there, as are all white races in the East, for their own interests, and these interests they have every right to defend. To abandon a country in which Great Britain has sunk untold wealth and which she has developed at the cost of countless precious lives, would be a betrayal of the pioneers who built up her trade in India, and of the industrial population at home which depends on that trade for its means of existence. Is England to make a present of all this, not even to the Indian people, but to a political camarilla, unrepresentative of that people, who have done nothing but insult her and who might then proceed to set up trade barriers against her and to form an alliance with her enemies?

And why should England alone be called upon to make these sacrifices? No other Western Power has shown a disposition to follow suit. But if the principle of colonisation, or the acquisition of overseas possessions by Western races, is to be condemned, if self-government is to become the law in all backward countries, and every land is to be restored to its aboriginal inhabitants, then France must be required to renounce Algeria, Holland to renounce Java, Italy to renounce Tripoli, Spain to renounce Morocco, the Transvaal must be handed back to the Hottentots, and the United States of America to the Red Indians. In all these countries the white races are there by right of conquest, and they intend to stay there. Great Britain alone, then, is asked to abandon the lands she has developed and to renounce everything she has gained, not only by the sword, but by centuries of toil and industry.

Yet even the League of Nations, for all its professed belief in self-determination, hardly advocates this universal return to primeval conditions which must not only put a stop to all colonial expansion by over-populated Western countries—including Germany whose demand for "a place in the sun," otherwise a larger share of territory, has been continuously

put forward by her apologists—but must wipe civilisation from off three-quarters of the earth's surface. It would appear, then, that this policy emanates from some group of individuals whose advocacy of the claims of indigenous populations to self-government is confined solely to those populations under the present rule of Great Britain.

But apart from her own interests, Britain has her duty to the people of India, and that duty is to protect them from each other, as also from outside aggression. Because in this case her duty and her interests coincide, her duty remains no less her duty. To evacuate India would be, in the words of Mr. Lloyd George in 1922, "a betrayal of the interests of the Indian masses, unparalleled in history," of those masses who owe their existence to the peace, order and progress which for the first time they have enjoyed under British rule. The vast ameliorations brought into the lives of the Indian population by British administration in the past have already been referred to earlier in this book ; but for British legislation and British justice, India would still be sunk in mediæval darkness. Were Great Britain to abandon her now to the agitators who claim the right to govern her, the chaos would be such as the modern world has never seen. As Sir Reginald Craddock, with forty years' experience of India, eloquently expressed it :

The Afghans and the tribal warriors would pour over the great plains of the Punjab, and the Sikhs would be up to dispute their old conquests with the Pathans of the borderland. . . . The Nepalese would bethink them that they must not be left behind, and rich Bengal . . . would be the common theatre of countless invaders. . . . The Moplahs, like hill torrents, would flood over peaceful Malebar, bringing death and desolation to the helpless Hindus. Sikhs, Mahrattas, Rajputs and Mahommedans would be locked in the death-grapple for the mastery over the lands that each claimed.¹

Even in the Labour Party to-day some misgivings are entertained with regard to this frightful prospect. In answer to a member of the Party who, on May 26 of this year (1930), declared that there were Indians of responsibility who were prepared to take over the government of India, Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy replied : " All that he could say was that, when he put the point to Indians, from Mr. Gandhi downwards, every one of them admitted quite openly and freely that the result would be chaos, bloodshed and civil war. There was

no central, organised party which could combine the various elements in India."

This chaos might possibly be of short duration. Other European Powers would be waiting to take advantage of the situation, and before long conquerors less "idealistic" than the British might succeed in establishing their dominion over a helpless and divided people.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SURRENDER TO THE KUOMINTANG

THE question of China, though of vital importance to the British Empire, has so far not been touched on in the course of this book, since it was only after the accession of the Conservative Government of 1924-9 to power that agitation in that country became a serious danger to British interests.

The organisation with which the agents of the Soviet Government first established relations was the Kuomintang or Nationalist Party of China, formerly known as the Tung-Mên-Hui, formed by a group of students and revolutionaries and at first only a democratic and republican organisation. On August 13, 1912, after the dethronement of the Emperor it was renamed the Kuomintang and dissolved in the following year by order of Yuan-Shi-Kai. Thereafter it made its headquarters at Canton, in active opposition to the Government at Peking until after 1920, when it was reorganised as the Nationalist Party by Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen.

The Bolsheviks lost no time in getting into touch with the leaders of the Kuomintang. In China, as in Ireland, in India and in Egypt, they pursued the same policy of exploiting Nationalism for their own purpose, namely the destruction of the British Empire. In 1920 Lenin said that it was in China that the British Empire would be overthrown, and the Kuomintang, like Sinn Féin, Swaraj and the Wafd, was the instrument ready made to their hands. For the three principles of Sun-Yat-Sen—Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism—they had of course nothing but contempt, especially as, according to their view, "Sun-Yat-Sen's Socialism was of an absolutely inoffensive, and also quite futile nature."¹ But his xenophobia could be turned to account.

Meanwhile the pure doctrines of Bolshevism were being

¹ *China*, by Sing Sen Fu, pamphlet published by the Communist Party of Great Britain.

instilled into Chinese minds by the agents of Moscow. Agitators were trained at the Communist University of Tashkent. Communist groups were formed in Peking and Shanghai, Marxist evening classes were held in Canton. In 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was founded in Shanghai; by the following year Canton had become the hub of the movement. Through all this, Western inspiration was clearly visible, as for example in the *Appeal to Seamen* issued in 1922 by the Communist Party of Canton, where the passage occurs:

Brothers, let your iron hands grasp the Capitalist's throat, your knees press on the Capitalist's breast and your iron fists strike fiercely the Capitalist's head and break his skull to powder.

Compare this with the concluding words of the German Communist pamphlet, *The German Spartacists*:

In this last struggle of history for the highest aims of humanity our motto towards the enemy is "Hand on throat and knee on the breast."

In January 1923 a compact was definitely formed between the Chinese revolutionaries and Moscow, when Sun-Yat-Sen and Joffe, the head of the Soviet Mission, met in Shanghai and issued a joint manifesto linking up the Chinese with the Bolshevik movement. The Bolsheviks were now able to penetrate the Kuomintang with their influence, and a Communist Section of the Kuomintang was formed.

In order to render the Cantonese army more efficient Sun-Yat-Sen now sent his friend Morris Cohen to enlist the aid of American and Canadian instructors and military experts in the United States. The British and American Governments, however, prevented the execution of this plan, and "Sun-Yat-Sen then appealed to Germany and Soviet Russia. From Germany he succeeded in getting several volunteer airmen and from the U.S.S.R. a certain number of volunteer officers."¹ The intermediary in this affair seems to have been again Morris Cohen, as an interesting paragraph from the *Jewish World* of August 25, 1927, indicates. Under the heading "Who is 'Cohen Moi-Sha'?" the writer goes on to say:

He is so-called, I am informed, in China, where he is exercising the part of a Jew Süß, being a sort of power behind the throne among the Nationalists at Hankow. He started life, so it is said, as Mo Cohen, in the East End of London, whence he went to China with his father when he was a lad.

¹ *China*, by Sing Sen Fu, p. 83.

Cohen went later to Canada, where he

became a prominent member of a Secret Society called the Kop Twang, through which he in some way came across Sun-Yat-Sen and agreed to join his forces in China. It was through him that help was obtained for the organisation of Sun's army from Russia, and Cohen then turned his attention to the finances of the Hankow Nationalists. It is said that he is now the best hated man in Hankow, and to such an extent is this so, that he has found it necessary to spread reports of his assassination so that he may not become the victim of jealous plots. I need scarcely say that I retail these particulars with all reserve. But it seems to me that if there be such a man with such a career, his name might well be Cohen. Countering the probability of being killed by advertising himself as already assassinated certainly smacks of Jewish ingenuity.

In China as elsewhere the leadership of the revolutionary movement was thus largely in the hands of foreigners or of Chinese who had received a foreign education. This was the case with the three men, Gallent, Borodin and Chen, who carried on the campaign against Britain in Canton after the death of Sun-Yat-Sen on March 12, 1925.

Gallent or Galen, who has now assumed the name of Blucher, was a Russian general, dispatched by Moscow, of whom the Bolsheviks still have great hopes as a leader. Jacob Borodin, alias Michael Grusenbergh, was a more complex character. First heard of in Spain, where he had been sent by the Third International to carry on propaganda, he reappeared during the following year in Mexico and the United States, where he became known as a leading agitator. In 1922 he was smuggled into England as an "underground" agent to act as adviser to the British Communist Party. In August of the same year he was arrested under the name of George Brown in Glasgow, sentenced to six months' imprisonment and subsequently deported. Borodin then passed into the service of Sun-Yat-Sen, and was appointed Chief Adviser to the Government of Canton, where he received his salary regularly from the Soviet Embassy.

Borodin's colleague Mr. Eugene Chen, the Cantonese Foreign Minister, appears to have been a real Chinaman, but born in 1878 under the British flag in Trinidad, where he was known under the name of E. Bernard Acham (or Ackam). Later he came to England and qualified as a solicitor in London. He seems to have been living in Richmond when he suddenly made up his mind to go and "help China."

What influences brought him to this decision have never been

revealed, but it is interesting to note, that like many an Indian agitator, it was in England, to which he owed all his advantages of education and training, that he became the enemy of our too hospitable country. On his arrival in China he entered Government service, and during the War edited certain Peking newspapers in one of which, the *People's Tribune*, he daily vilified the British as "brutal murderers, robbers, exploiters and liars." In 1919 he joined Sun-Yat-Sen's Party, and in 1922 became Foreign Adviser to the Canton Government.

Such were the men with whom the Conservative Government was called upon to conduct negotiations on their accession to power in the autumn of 1924. It will be seen that this was no matter of opposing Chinese Nationalism, but of defending British interests against the intrigues and attacks of Britain's most relentless enemy—Soviet Russia.

By the spring of 1925 the revolutionary movement, still under the guise of Chinese nationalism, began to take the form of open violence. Anti-British riots, instigated by Soviet agents, broke out at Shanghai and Shameen in May and June. The revolutionary army, known as the Kuominchun under the so-called "Christian General" Feng-Yu-hsiang, had been formed in the north, whilst the Canton army was commanded by Chiang-Kai-shek. By the autumn of 1926 the latter's forces had moved from Canton to Hankow, which was occupied on September 10, and now became the centre of direction. Then came the capture of the British Concession in that city on January 5, 1927, which brought matters to a head.

Throughout this period the Conservative Government had continued to pursue a policy of conciliation and of "sympathy with Chinese aspirations."

"Our only wish," said Sir Austen Chamberlain on September 18, 1925, "is for a strong, united, independent, orderly and prosperous China. . . . We are ready to meet China half-way. We are ready to relinquish special rights just in proportion as the Chinese Government can assure to our own nationals the due enjoyment of the ordinary rights of foreigners in every country."

This might have been all very well if there had been any such thing as "China" to deal with. But China was now only a geographical term, not a political entity, since the whole country was split up into factions all at war with each other. As Mr. Kellogg, the American Secretary of State, pointed out in January 1927, although the United States were ready to enter into negotiations for new treaties with a Central Govern-

ment, it was difficult to know with whom to negotiate since there was no Government to speak for the whole of China. This was the view generally taken by the other Powers. Great Britain, however, persisted in regarding as representative of Chinese aspirations the so-called Nationalists who were in reality the least entitled to this name, since they were working in co-operation with German and Soviet agents intent on pursuing their own aims regardless of Chinese interests. In accordance with this policy Mr. (now Sir Miles) Lampson, the new British representative, carried on friendly conversations with Mr. Chen at Hankow throughout the course of ten days in December 1926, as a result of which the following Memorandum was drawn up by the British Government :

The Powers should announce their readiness to recognise the right of China to tariff autonomy as soon as she herself had settled and promulgated a new national tariff. They should modify their traditional attitude of rigid insistence on the strict letter of treaty rights and admit the essential justice of the Chinese claim for treaty revision.

By this means it was hoped to placate the Chinese Nationalists and to prevent British interests in Hankow from becoming the target for the anti-foreign demonstrations which had recently been directed against the Japanese Concession in that city. But whoever drafted this Memorandum—for it was certainly not Sir Austen Chamberlain—ignored the fact that the Oriental mind respects force above all things, and the only impression this conveyed to the Chinese was that Britain was mortally afraid and could be defied with impunity. The reply to this Memorandum was the attack on the British Concession in Hankow on January 4, 1927, by a mob yelling "Down with British Imperialism!" The Concession, defended only by a small contingent of British marines who displayed exemplary patience in holding back the frenzied crowd for four hours without firing a shot, was finally overrun and the women and children were hastily evacuated from Hankow. It should be noted that the other foreign Concessions remained immune from attack, which was thus concentrated on the Concession of the only Power that had condescended to negotiate with the Nationalist leaders. Mr. Chen, when appealed to, replied that matters were now outside his Government's control, and indeed it was recognised that the whole affair had been instigated by the Russian Bolshevik general, Gallent. Of what use then to parley further with

Chen ? Clearly the time for words had gone by and the moment for action had arrived. The capture of the Hankow Concession had shown the British forces in China to be inadequate, and the Government decided to send out troops for the defence of Shanghai, which was now threatened with the same fate as Hankow. The first transport sailed for China on January 24, 1927.

This resolute action met with the instant opposition of the so-called "Labour" movement. Throughout the past six months they had increased the Government's difficulties in dealing with Mr. Chen, by negotiating with him on their own account and assuring him of their sympathy. A link had been established with him in London by means of the "Chinese Information Bureau," at 6, Phene Street, Chelsea, the house of Colonel L'Estrange Malone, now Labour Member for Northampton, from which office atrocious accusations against the British in China had been systematically circulated throughout the summer of 1925. During the Shanghai riots in May and June the Bureau had circulated an illustrated sheet headed: "The Peaceful Chinese Patriots died by Barbarous British Hands"; other pictures showed British machine-guns prepared to fire on unarmed Chinese demonstrators. The Bureau, which worked in touch with the Minority Movement, moved later to 65, Belgrave Road, where it was continued under the direction of Colonel Malone and of Mr. R. O. Bridgeman, formerly in the British Diplomatic Service. A further step was taken in December 1926 by the formation of a "British Labour Council for Chinese Freedom," under the chairmanship of George Hicks, and with Ben Tillett, G. Lansbury and Colonel Malone on the council.

Of a more vociferous kind were the "Hands Off China Committees," which originated in Russia and were organised in London by various trade unions, trades councils and also Communist organisations such as the C.P.G.B., N.U.W.C.M., I.C.W.P.A., Teachers' Labour League, etc. A manifesto demanding the withdrawal of all British warships from Chinese waters was issued by this movement in December 1926, and signed by Messrs. Maxton, Wallhead, Dunnico, George Hicks, Ben Tillett, A. Gossip, Dr. Norman Leys, Lady Warwick and Mr. Bertrand Russell, as well as by the avowed Communists, A. Inkpin, Tom Mann, Harry Pollitt, etc. Once more Communists and Socialists were seen standing together as one man to defend the enemies of the British Empire.

The dispatch of the troops to China was the signal for all

these groups to coalesce in protests calculated to neutralise the whole effect this measure was intended to produce. The Shanghai Defence Force was dispatched with no belligerent intentions, but purely to protect British lives and property. There was no question of making war on China, but, on the contrary, of preventing pillage and bloodshed. This was the more necessary in view of the terrorisation exercised by the revolutionaries over the minds of the Chinese. Bolshevik agents had been clever enough to represent to them that the recognition of Russia by the Labour Government was evidence of the fear in which Britain held the formidable power of the Soviets—a conception particularly impressive to the Oriental mind. Everything therefore depended on restoring Chinese confidence in the power of Britain by showing that she would not tolerate outrages directed against her possessions or her subjects in the Far East. A display of force carried out resolutely at this crisis might, indeed, have put an end to the whole trouble but for the intervention of the Socialists. Their line of conduct was all the more perfidious in that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald himself had at first opposed the surrender of British interests in China. Writing in the I.L.P. organ, *Forward*, on January 15, 1927, he had said :

Nothing could justify our authorities if they simply walked away from settlements which past Chinese Governments have allowed us to control, and where our people have taken up their abode under the security which they believed that treaties gave them. We must have an agreement, and during its negotiation ordinary precautions must be taken.

Negotiation was to take the form of further conversations with Mr. Chen, for whom the Socialists entertained the same *tendresse* as for de Valera, Gandhi, Zaghlul or any other agitator against British rule. But, as has been seen, the Conservatives had exhausted all possibilities of an understanding in this direction, having continued to parley with Chen until he himself declared at Hankow that the situation had got beyond his control.

Yet even now the Government continued to pursue its policy of conciliation by further proposals to China on January 29, which were in effect an almost complete surrender of British interests !

These overtures were followed by the Hankow Agreement on February 9, according to which the British Concessions at Hankow and Kiukiang were handed over to Chinese control.

Asked by Sir Clement Kinloch-Cooke in the House on March 28, whether he was aware "that the Hankow Agreement had had no beneficial results whatever, but rather the contrary, and that the position of the British nationals in Hankow had become untenable," Sir Austen Chamberlain replied that he could not at present pronounce a final judgment on the results of the Agreement, and added :

Obviously that Agreement, signed in good faith on our side, and, as we believe, in good faith by Mr. Chen, must be judged by the results it produces.

The Socialists were thus not alone in trusting to Mr. Chen, the Conservative leaders having gone so far in this direction as to alienate their own supporters at home and rouse fierce indignation amongst British nationals in China.

This policy of surrender, as usual, did nothing to placate the Labour Party, which, whilst applauding every step of the Government's climb-down, continued their campaign of abuse and misrepresentation. At the very moment that the proposals of January 29 were being made to China, the Labour Party and the T.U.C. sent a message to the Cantonese "deploring the flaunted military demonstration against the Canton Government," and venomously attacking British policy. Amongst the signatories to this manifesto was Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

On February 6 the Labour Party held a mass meeting at the Albert Hall to protest against the sending of troops to China. The meeting was presided over by Mr. George Hicks, who declared : "We are met in the shadow of war. We have watched this monstrous business move on during the past few days. We are told that this is called the Shanghai Defence Force and not the Chinese Expeditionary Force. The guns will kill just the same." Amongst other speakers were Messrs. Maxton, Lansbury and Tillett, but the star turn of the evening was Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who declared that "an hour's conversation with Mr. Chen was worth an Army Corps in removing risks to men and women" in Shanghai, and demanded that the troops should not be allowed to land there.

It is interesting to note that an article, reproducing parts of this speech and bearing the signature of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, appeared in an organ of the Grand Orient of France, *La Paix*, for February, in which the same accusations against the British Government were repeated.

Is there a man or woman who believes you can send 20,000 troops into a foreign country, not for the purpose of war, but to subdue mobs? . . . What is most characteristic in these military preparations is that even if they were made with the best intentions, they do not take on the same aspect at Hankow as in London. . . . We cannot hold China in vassalage or slavery. . . . Old China is dead and a new China is born, full of the sentiment of its national dignity.

The policy of the Labour Party was thus seen to be in complete accord with the projects of the great Masonic power that has played a leading part in the history of world revolution—projects always directed against the interests of France. For France too, as well as Italy, Japan, Spain and Portugal, concerned for the safety of their nationals, had sent military detachments to China, where the situation was becoming daily more threatening.

The outrages committed at Nanking that March, when several British subjects were killed and much British property destroyed, were followed by a general strike and Communist outbreak in Shanghai. On March 21 the native part of the city fell beneath the attack of Cantonese troops, and contingents from British, French, American, Japanese and Italian warships were landed to protect the foreign Concessions. It was only the presence of these forces that saved the inhabitants of the foreign settlements from massacre.

The action of the Conservative Government in sending out the Shanghai Defence Force was thus fully justified. The only matter for regret is that any concessions should have been made to the clamour of the Socialists at home or to the demands of the Chinese allies of Moscow masquerading as Nationalists. To negotiate with these elements was to do no better service to Chinese than to British interests, and the Chinese themselves were not long in finding out they had been duped by the Bolsheviks.

The arrival of the British troops not only intimidated the revolutionaries, but gave heart to the moderate section of the Kuomintang, which now realised that the plans of Moscow were not disinterested and that the aid rendered by the Bolsheviks to the Kuomintang was given for a purpose that had nothing to do with Chinese nationalism.

On April 6, 1927, the Soviet Embassy in Peking was raided by Chang Tso Lin's emissaries and the whole plot was laid bare. The arms, ammunition and money, it was found, were supplied to the troops of Feng-Yu-hsiang in the north and to

the Cantonese in the south by the Bolsheviks, although on August 3, 1926, Karakhan, the Soviet Ambassador in Peking, had said :

I can state categorically that the Soviet Government is not supplying arms to Feng-Yu-hsiang and the Kuominchun. All reports about the supply of arms are false, as is also the report that an agreement has been concluded to supply arms.

The minutes of a secret meeting, held in Moscow the very day after these words were uttered, were discovered, showing how the whole movement in China was being directed by the Soviet Government and instructions issued to Borodin and Gallent.¹ Minutes of other meetings of the Polit Bureau and the Military Council of China were also found, with discussions on the funds required for carrying on the campaign. One document, marked "Strictly confidential," contained instructions to the Soviet Embassy from Moscow, saying: "Stir up the mob to violence against Europeans in general, and the British in particular." In Peking, as in London and elsewhere, it was clearly shown that the Bolsheviks were abusing diplomatic privileges by making the Soviet Embassy a centre of intrigue and revolutionary propaganda.

These revelations stirred up the British Foreign Office to some slight activity, and Sir Austen Chamberlain dispatched a note to Russia, saying that he would break off relations with the Soviet Government without further warning if he found further proof of their propaganda against this country. It is difficult to see what further proof was needed, but as Mr. Leslie Urquhart, President of the Association of British Creditors of Russia, observed :

If he really wants to find proof of Bolshevik intrigue against Great Britain, why not do what other nations have done and search the documents at the Soviet Embassy in London? The British Government's failure to turn the Soviet agents out of this country [Mr. Urquhart added] is at this moment having a very serious effect in China, where the Bolshevik advisers of Mr. Chen, the Cantonese Foreign Minister, are telling him that Great Britain can be treated with impunity.

The raid on Arcos in London in May was the belated sequel to these events; had this taken place immediately after the Peking raid and been extended to the Soviet Embassy as Mr. Urquhart had suggested, the effect would have been still

¹ See *ante*, p. 319.

more impressive, and would, moreover, have established a bond of sympathy between the British Government and the disillusioned Nationalists of China. Soviet Russia would then have been recognised as the common enemy of both countries and the intimidation she exercised over the minds of the Chinese might have been dispelled. As it was, the Chinese Nationalists were left to act alone, and the anti-Communist elements in the Kuomintang, under the leadership of General Chiang Kai-shek, now severed their connection with the Bolsheviks and set up a new Nationalist Government in Nanking.

The firm action taken with regard to Arcos, followed by the rupture of relations between Great Britain and Russia, undoubtedly inspired the Chinese Nationalist leaders with fresh courage, and by the end of the summer the Soviet agents in China had prudently taken their departure. Mr. Eugene Chen, accompanied by Madame Sun-Yat-Sen, repaired to his spiritual home, Moscow, on August 29, whither Borodin had preceded him a month earlier. In a manifesto to the Chinese people, Chiang Kai-shek declared :

We cannot allow the Communists to make China the experimental field for Communism and cause millions to die without reason. The tactics of the Bolsheviks are to stir up mob violence through wholesale destruction in order to seize political power. . . . If we allow their horrible politics to prevail all will be brought to nought.

The victory over Bolshevism seemed for the moment complete, but the spirit of unrest had entered into the Chinese populace and was not to be so easily allayed. In December Canton was captured by the Red forces after a fresh influx of agents from Soviet Russia, and an orgy of burning and looting took place, followed by fearful atrocities. Then came the reaction and counter-terrorism exercised against the Bolsheviks in a characteristically Chinese manner. Henceforth China was to be the scene of a swaying battle, Communists and anti-Communists alternately gaining the upper hand in one city after another up to the present time. These so-called Communists subscribe, however, in no way to the doctrines of Communism, their only idea being loot. All that the Bolsheviks have accomplished is to stir up in them a spirit of anarchy which has reduced the country to chaos.

The Conservative Government, in a justification of its Chinese policy, cites with complacency the signing of the

Nanking Treaty, i.e. the Treaty between Great Britain and the Nationalist Government established at Nanking, on December 20, 1928, which was "to mark a new phase" in Anglo-Chinese relations. In reality, as Mr. J. O. P. Bland, the well-known authority on Chinese affairs, points out,¹ the Treaty marked no new phase, but merely embodied in formal terms a promise made long before, of tariff autonomy. As to the results, the granting of tariff autonomy to the Kuomintang faction enabled them to make larger exactions by killing trade, native and foreign. The only benefit for British trade that was expected from the Treaty, namely the abolition of lekin taxes, is no nearer than when first promised in 1901 and again in 1921. It is true that the Nanking Government declared, on paper, that lekin was to be abolished as from January 1, 1931, and replaced by "Excise Revenue." But the gesture was an empty one, intended to save its face, for the Kuomintang has no power over the provincial magnates, who levy whatever taxes they think fit.

As to the general state of the country, by the time the Treaty was signed affairs had passed out of Nanking's control, and a *Times* correspondent, in reviewing the record of 1929, pointed out that eleven foreigners had been murdered during the year, all but one in the provinces Nanking claimed to control, and that brigandage and Communism set law in defiance. Moreover, by a Mandate at the end of the same year the Nanking Government summarily abolished all extra-territorial rights as from January 1930—a measure that could hardly be interpreted as conciliatory.

In looking back at the events of the past few years in China, it is impossible not to ask oneself what benefit Great Britain acquired for herself or conferred on the Chinese people by her surrender of Christmas 1926. The Hankow Concession, one of the greatest monuments to British energy, British enterprise and British foresight, is derelict, with grass growing in the streets. It was not merely the vast sums expended on its development, said to amount to over 100 million sterling, that were sacrificed to this policy; the surrender of Hankow involved much more than gold. It was the destruction of the British Concession as a base for law and order that produced a moral effect more disastrous than financial losses.

To-day, as Mr. J. O. P. Bland has recently pointed out, Shanghai (which during the last three years we have had to spend £6,000,000 yearly to defend) is "the only centre of

¹ Private communication to the author.

wealth and trade in China which has not been looted, the only efficiently administered city in the land."

And Mr. Bland goes on to ask :

How . . . shall we explain the fact that three successive British Governments have persisted in a policy towards China, which ignores all our experience during a century of intercourse with that country, and which has signally failed to contribute anything towards the establishment of a stable Chinese Government? . . . The answer lies in the prevalence of political idealism in high quarters, of that idealism which advocates elevating the masses in the East by virtue of democratic institutions, which professes its belief in racial equality, self-determination and all the pet delusions of the international doctrinaire, . . . which displays its moral superiority by assuming in every difference with another country that England must be in the wrong, and that the opponent is therefore entitled to sympathy and support. The influence of this type of denationalised idealism may be clearly traced, since the beginning of the century, in the wanton sacrifice of British interests at many a vital point, most notably in India, Egypt and Ireland.¹

Mr. Bland locates this school of thought at present largely in the Round Table Group, Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) and the League of Nations Union. In this connection it may be of interest to quote an expression of opinion coming from an entirely different source which tends to corroborate the same view. The following is an extract from a letter received by the present writer in 1925 from a British official in the East :

I take a very serious view of the intrigues of the " Round Table " and " Fabian Society " amongst the superior Civil Services of the Crown. I have for some time past been doing all in my power to combat this evil, but with no success, as the " Round Table " is now very strongly represented in High Places in official life and in Parliamentary circles : and practically holds any Government in its power which is in any way dependent on this particular class of permanent official, combined with the political Zionists in maintaining the Party in position. I have just retired from — where I have been the last five years . . . and have seen and felt—very much to my cost—the power wielded by these two pernicious bodies working together. It remains to be seen whether Mr. Baldwin's Government will prove strong enough to grapple with this evil. The British Institute for International Affairs is its

¹ " The Road to Ruin in China " in the *English Review* of April 1930. See also Mr. J. O. P. Bland's articles, " China : a Diehard Delusion " and " China's Road to Ruin " in the *English Review* of June 1927 and March 1929.

most recent stunt—from which it would appear that they have succeeded in drawing the Foreign Office into their net as well.

These statements, for which the present writer takes no responsibility, seem worthy of consideration as the testimony of a man on the spot, in a country other than China, concurring to a large extent with the conclusions of a profound student of Chinese affairs, and providing some explanation of the "continuity of foreign policy" which has proved so fatal to British interests. The paralysis that has afflicted every Government in turn may in part be produced by a group of political "Idealists," in the main sincere, but not unsusceptible to dangerous guidance. I find it difficult, however, to believe that such institutions as the Round Table Group, Chatham House, the League of Nations Union or even the Fabian Society—which has certainly succeeded in penetrating the Ministries and the whole Civil Service—could, unless in alliance with financial power, exercise so decisive an influence on the councils of the nation and bend statesmen of every party to their will. More potent causes for the suicidal tendencies of the British Empire must be at work—the Hidden Hand operates under many disguises.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SURRENDER TO THE WAFD

ALTHOUGH neither Egypt nor Palestine has ever formed a part of the British Empire, it is necessary to include them in this survey, because as spheres of British influence, occupying geographically an important key position, they offer a particularly vulnerable point for attack by the enemies of Britain.

England, moreover, throughout the last fifty years has owned considerable interests in Egypt, and together with other European countries, notably France and Italy, has spent vast sums in developing the country both for her own benefit and that of the native population. The construction of the Assuan Dam and of barrages on the Nile created perennial irrigation and added millions of acres to the cultivated areas; the condition of the people was immensely improved; slavery was abolished and the finances of the country, disordered by the Khedives, restored to prosperity—all this by the united efforts of European Powers, but particularly by the British.

From 1882 until the outbreak of War Egypt was under the joint control of Great Britain, represented by a Consul-General and a Sirdar, and of Turkey, represented by the Khedive. When Turkey entered the War on the side of Germany, Great Britain took immediate steps to protect her interests and those of her allies in Egypt, and to defend that region from aggression. Accordingly a British Protectorate over Egypt was declared on December 18, 1914. At the same time the Khedive was deposed and replaced by Prince Hussein, under the title of Sultan of Egypt. On the death of Hussein on October 9, 1917, the succession passed to his brother Ahmed Fuad, who, later on, under the Constitution of 1923, was styled "King of Egypt and the Sudan."

Although under an Egyptian ruler, whose relations with Great Britain were perfectly harmonious, the Watanists or Nationalists of Egypt, who since the time of Arabi in 1882

had agitated against British participation in the administration of the country, insisted directly after the War that the Protectorate should be ended. The leader of this party was Zaghlul Pasha, a former ally of Arabi, who was pro-Turk and anti-British, and an organisation named the Wafd was formed to carry out his schemes.

In November 1918 Zaghlul went to the High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, and demanded complete independence. When this was refused the Wafd issued the most inflammatory proclamations against Great Britain, a murder gang known as the "Vengeance Society" was formed and several British officers were assassinated. The conspirators were finally brought to trial, and in March 1919 the British military authorities arrested Zaghlul with several of his associates and deported them to Malta.

This was the signal for a violent outbreak all over the valley of the Nile. Whereupon the British Government ordered the release of Zaghlul and his friends, who made their way to Paris, whence they continued to direct the activities of the Wafd. A mission to Egypt, headed by Lord Milner, was now boycotted by order of Zaghlul, who, however, agreed to come to London and meet Lord Milner during the summer of 1920. Here—apparently as a reward for good conduct—a memorandum was handed to him by Lord Milner recommending the abolition of the British Protectorate, the recognition of Egypt as an independent State, though safeguarding special British interests. This was so much more than Zaghlul had expected that he was emboldened to increase his demands, which rendered all settlement impossible. He was then permitted to return to Egypt, where he continued to carry on agitation. Violent riots took place in Alexandria in June 1921, and the negotiations that Great Britain was conducting with the Cabinet of Adly Pasha broke down.

A further handful of fuel was cast on the blaze that was spreading throughout Egypt, by the arrival in Egypt in the autumn of a deputation consisting of six Members of Parliament—five "Labour" and one Wee Free Liberal—who were welcomed at Alexandria by leading Zaghlulists, and who proceeded to issue a *communiqué* proclaiming their opinion that complete independence should be given to Egypt. Considering that Zaghlul Pasha had recently been revealed as one of the first debenture holders in "Labour's" official organ, the *Daily Herald*, this action may perhaps be set down to a praiseworthy sense of gratitude.

The British Government now, in a Note on December 3, 1921, ventured on a firmer line which, like all intermittent displays of authority, produced a violent repercussion. A manifesto on Gandhist lines was issued by the leading Zaghlulists, advocating a policy of passive resistance and demanding a boycott of all British goods, enterprises and individuals. Rioting broke out anew. The British Government, forced to restore order, again arrested Zaghlul with some of his companions and sent them this time to the Seychelles, in spite of the protests of the Labour Party. Then, in the following month of February 1922, Great Britain solemnly proclaimed the independence of Egypt.

In order to appreciate the full significance of such a step at this juncture, it is necessary to realise what was going on in the background of these events. If Great Britain had only had the Egyptian Nationalists to reckon with, a policy of concessions, however inexpedient, would at any rate have been comprehensible. Many honest and high-minded statesmen sincerely believe that at times of crisis the only path to peace lies in partially yielding to the demands of the agitators. Judging others by themselves, they imagine that an appeal to reason and to a sense of "fair play" cannot fail in its effect. Although controverted by history, which teaches that times of crisis are the last moments at which to yield, this theory does honour to the hearts, if not the heads, of those who entertain it.

But in Egypt, as in India, in China and in Ireland, the Nationalist movement was backed by a fiercer force, opposed as much to true Nationalism as to the interests of the British Empire. Behind Zaghlul and his Wafdists stood the dark directory of world revolution that now had its seat in Moscow.

BOLSHEVISM IN EGYPT

It will be remembered that, in an earlier chapter of this book, Egyptian delegates were present at the meeting in the house of Count Reventlow in Berlin in January 1920, when the plan for an International League against British and French Imperialism was drawn up. At this date the movement was almost entirely in the hands of Germany, but soon after passed, nominally at least, under the control of Moscow. In September of the same year a Congress of the Peoples of the East was organised by the Soviet Government at Baku, and a permanent centre was created in order to direct

revolutionary propaganda in Eastern countries. Moscow's intentions with regard to Egypt were well set out in the *Novi Vostok*, organ of the Association of Oriental Studies:

The severance of India and Egypt from the Empire, the liberation of those two peoples with their 300 millions of labouring population, means the complete dissolution of imperialistic England, the most solid fortress of world capitalism.¹

In 1921, Nuorteva, a Finnish Bolshevik, President of the Propaganda Section of the Third International, who was deported from England early in the same year, said in a memorandum addressed to the Bureau of the West European Secretariat:

Owing to its high cultural level, its numerically strong class of intellectuals and its class-conscious proletariat, Egypt is to-day the most favourable *place d'armes* for the deployment of the Red Army of Workers.

The hatred of the Egyptians towards the British Capitalists has been repeatedly revealed during recent years of individual outbreaks of terrorism, risings and so on. The World War, the Sèvres Treaty, the successes of Mustapha Kemal Pasha, have proved to the leaders of the Egyptian Nationalists that Great Britain is not as strong as they believed. . . .

The Western Secretariat for Propaganda is instructed to take all necessary steps to follow the development of events in Egypt as closely as possible, and to keep in touch with all Egyptian revolutionary circles and groups, assisting them by all means in their power. . . .

Great Britain still remains the most dangerous enemy of Soviet Russia and the Third International.²

In 1922 the Communist Party of Egypt was formed out of the existing Socialist Party in that country. The principal instigator of the movement was a certain Joseph Rosenthal, a Russian Jew who had lived some twenty years in Egypt, taking a leading part in anarchist activities. His daughter Charlotte, an extremely skilful propagandist, had been educated at a Soviet school in Moscow and now acted as courier between Egypt and Palestine.

An emissary from Moscow, another Jew named Avigdor Weiss, now arrived on the scene, and after his return represented the Communist Party of Egypt at the Congress of the Third International in Moscow. At the same time a young

¹ No. 2, p. 190.

² *Morning Post*, June 21, 1921.

Egyptian, Hosni el Orabi, was sent to Moscow, whence he returned with his instructions and a considerable sum of money. Hosni was then appointed President of the Communist Party of Egypt.

Active Bolshevik centres had now been created in Alexandria and also in Palestine, where a number of the leaders, including the Rosenthals, were arrested in November 1920. For some inscrutable reason not apparent even to men responsible for maintaining law and order in that country—I quote from the report of a British official at the time—the Rosenthals were released and allowed to return to Alexandria, where they resumed their activities under a new and more secret cover—"Clarté."

This organisation, a sort of International of Intellectual Socialists and Pacifists, both pro-German and pro-Jewish in their outlook, had been founded in Paris in 1919 by Henri Barbusse, author of the defeatist novel *Le Feu*, and owned a lodge in Paris under the Grand Orient of France. Many of the leading Pacifists and Socialists in this country and abroad were members of this association, which has now joined up with the French Communist Party and ceased to exist, at any rate under the same name, as a separate organisation. By 1922 Clarté had formed branches in all parts of the world, including England, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Italy, the U.S.A., etc. In July 1921 a branch was formed in Alexandria under the direction of Joseph Rosenthal after his return from Palestine. A committee was formed in the following February, consisting of three Jews, a Greek and a Syrian, and meetings were held at 18, Sharia Nubar Pasha, the headquarters of the Egyptian Communist Party, close to the National Grand Lodge of Egypt. It was here that the scheme was developed for forming a General Confederation of Labour in order to enrol the Egyptian workers in the Communist movement. The further committee formed for this purpose included Joseph Rosenthal, Solomon Saslavsky, Hosni el Orabi and Anton Marun, a Levantine lawyer. Meetings of working-men were held by the Clarté group with the object of stirring up insurrection. By September 1922 Avigdor Weiss was able to declare at the Congress of the Third International in Moscow that the Communist Party of Egypt now numbered 10,000 members.

It must not be supposed, however, that these people were converts to the doctrines of Communism. In Egypt, as in India, in China and all Eastern countries, attacks on the

principle of property and the family, on all moral codes, and on religious and national feeling, met with little response from the workers in general. As a popular Egyptian paper, *La Réforme*, of June 14, 1923, observed :

Communism cannot find adepts in Egypt. The Mohammedan religion, the customs of the country, the conditions of work . . . leave no chance for the success of Communism. To speak of Communism in a religious *milieu* is to ignore completely both the principles of Communism and the religion and customs of the country.

In the East—and also in Ireland, to which much the same description applies—Moscow proceeds therefore along a totally different line from the one adopted in the West of Europe. This is perfectly intelligible to the few who understand that the ultimate aim of Bolshevism is not the application of the pure doctrines of Communism—which have never been practised in Moscow—but a universal revolution, leading to world domination by the power which Moscow represents. For this purpose it is unnecessary to bemuse the minds of the people with the obscure theories of Marxism, all that is necessary is to stir them up to insurrection against existing authority. In this the Soviet agents so far succeeded as to bring about a series of Bolshevik risings. The first of these took place on March 18, 1923, after which the leaders, Hosni el Orabi and Marun, Secretary of the Confederation of Labour, were arrested and brought to trial, but acquitted. This indulgence encouraged them to further efforts, and a more serious insurrection took place in the following spring of 1924, but although this time Hosni and Marun were sentenced in July to three years' imprisonment, and the Confederation of Labour was dissolved, the real instigators—Rosenthal, Saslavsky, Abraham Katz and Eli Zamberg—succeeded in evading punishment.

The nationality of these *Vertrauensmänner* is, of course, immediately apparent; indeed, an enumeration of the Bolshevik agents of the same race in Egypt and Palestine at this date might prove wearisome: Goldberg, Goldstein, Abramovitch, Levin, Rosenblum, Weissmann, Pollak, Schonberg, Olchik, Womberg, Zeitmann—the list might be considerably extended. The intimate connection between these conspirators and Moscow was proved by the letters which passed between the Egyptian Communist Party and the Third International, and which were intercepted by the police a year later. The hectoring tone

adopted by the IKKI (Executive Committee of the Communist International) showed that the Party was entirely directed by Moscow, and the Egyptian leaders were taken to task for dilatoriness in filling in a questionnaire inquiring into the minutest details of the Party's organisation in Egypt. It was thus, not with an indigenous form of Communism, but with a conspiracy absolutely under the control of Britain's greatest enemy, Soviet Russia, that the British authorities were called upon to deal.

THE GRAND ORIENT

Meanwhile another intrigue was at work in Egypt during the same period. In a book devoted to the subject I have endeavoured to describe the influence exercised in the background of revolutionary movements by secret societies,¹ particularly by Grand Orient Freemasonry since its penetration by the Bavarian Illuminati. This great Masonic power has been the bitter enemy of British Freemasonry since the latter broke off relations in 1878, owing to the Grand Orient's official repudiation of the "Great Architect of the Universe" and the immortality of the soul. In Egypt both these forms of Masonry have their lodges, British Masonry owning the Grand Lodge of Cairo of which the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, was the District Grand Master, and Egyptian Masonry owning the National Grand Lodge of Egypt, affiliated to the Grand Orient, with headquarters at 32, Sharia Soliman Pasha, Cairo. In 1922 the Grand Master of the latter lodge was a certain Idris Bey Raghib, whom his brother Masons accused of exploiting Masonry for his own profit. After much quarrelling Idris Raghib resigned and the lodge elected Prince Mahommed Ali, brother of the ex-Khedive, in his place. Idris Raghib, who was already connected with the Wafd, then founded a dissident Grand Lodge of his own with Hassan Nashaat Pasha as Grand Master and Zaghlul Pasha as Honorary Grand Master. As Hassan Nashaat Pasha took little part in the proceedings of the lodge, a certain Lewa Ali Pasha Fahmi, one of Zaghlul's closest adherents, functioned in his place, and the lodge became a meeting-place for the extreme elements of the Wafd. To this circle the most notorious Zaghlulist agitators and criminals belonged, one of whom was actually working hand in glove with the Bolshevist agent, Avigdor Weiss.

At the same time the Scottish Rite of the Grand Orient in

¹ *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* (1924), Boswell Printing and Publishing Company.

Egypt had for its head Prince Omar Tossoun, described as a high adept, who supported all anti-British activities in Egypt and anti-Italian in Libya.

Masonic intrigue against Great Britain was thus carried on along two different lines—the dissident lodge of Idris Raghib being linked to the terrorist side of the Wafd's activities, whilst the Scottish Rite was headed by a determined enemy of this country. Both these lodges aimed directly at the annihilation of British power in Egypt.

Yet this was the year chosen by Mr. Lloyd George's Government to proclaim Egyptian independence. The whole country was in a state of unrest: Zaghlul had just brought off his coup of a "Gandhi boycott"; the Masonic lodges were acting as rallying centres for malcontents; the Bolsheviks were gloating over the evident weakness of British authority in Egypt; the secret murder gangs, soon to emerge into the light, were maturing their plans—when *on February 28, 1922, Great Britain declared her Protectorate at an end and Egypt to be an independent State.*

In view, however, of the disturbed state of the country the British Government reserved to itself the right, pending negotiations, to ensure the security of British communications in Egypt, defence against foreign aggression, the security of foreign interests and protection of minorities, also the control of the Sudan. For the safety, therefore, of all foreign nationals and interests, not only those of Great Britain, the British garrison was left in Egypt as a police force until such time as a Government had been established in Egypt which could be relied on to provide the necessary protection.

These reservations were deeply resented by Zaghlul and his followers, and the reply to Great Britain's proclamation of Egyptian Independence was a renewed outbreak of rioting and a wave of political crime, instigated by the Wafd, that swept all over the country.

It was, of course, obvious that the terms imposed could not satisfy the Nationalists, who, as in India, demanded nothing less than complete independence.

After the promulgation of the Constitution of 1923 and the abolition of martial law, Zaghlul was permitted by the British Government to return from exile in time for the elections of February 1924. The result of these was to give the Nationalists a sweeping majority, and Zaghlul now became Prime Minister. Meanwhile the Labour Party had come into office in England, and in October Zaghlul came over to London to

confer with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. In view of the sympathy expressed hitherto by the Labour Party with the aims of the Zaghlulists it might have been expected that the two Premiers would find themselves completely in accord. But Mr. MacDonald evidently knew how far he could go with safety, and he declined to agree to the withdrawal of all British troops from Egyptian territory, the abandonment of the British claim to share in the defence of the Suez Canal or the surrender of the Sudan to Egypt.

Zaghlul accordingly returned dissatisfied to Egypt, and grave disturbances, provoked by the Wafd, soon broke out in that country and in the Sudan. The climax was the assassination of the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, in the streets of Cairo on November 19 of the same year, 1924.

The authors of this crime, that is to say the men who actually committed it, were found at their trial in May 1925 to have been members of certain secret societies—the "Society of Fraternal Solidarity" and the "Fidayeen"—and the Central Committee of the gang was said to have been composed of Shaffik Mansur, Ahmed Maher and Nokrashî. Seven of the eight men convicted were hanged, and the eighth, who turned King's evidence, was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

But this was not to get to the root of the matter. As the Procureur-General at the trial in his closing speech from the bench observed :

"These men are all unbalanced creatures who were ready to sacrifice their lives gladly at the behest of their masters in the background."

Who these masters were was nowhere indicated. It is a curious point that in the case of practically all political assassinations of recent years the culprits have been found, usually on their own confession, to be members of a secret society which had ordered them to do the deed, yet *in no case has the society in question been brought to book*, nor have efforts ever apparently been made to discover its identity. The wretched instruments in every instance have paid the penalty, whilst their instigators have remained securely in the background. Is it not permissible to ask whether behind these crimes there may not be some power so formidable that even the administrators of justice dare not incur its vengeance ?

In the case of the murder of Sir Lee Stack some effort was made to trace the crime to its real authors, and a further batch of seven men was arrested and brought to trial on

February 10, 1926; these included Ahmed Maher and Mahmoud Effendi Nokrashy, who, though mentioned at the first trial, had not been convicted. The complicity of the Wafd in the affair was now revealed, for both these men had held office under Zaghlul, and though Zaghlul resigned after the murder of the Sirdar, they still retained their posts. So powerful were the influences brought to bear on the Court that only one of the seven accused was convicted, both ex-Ministers being declared innocent and released. Judge Kershaw, the only British judge who participated in the trial, resigned in protest at this grave miscarriage of justice. A strong protest was also entered by Lord Lloyd, who had arrived in October 1925 to take up the post of High Commissioner, and who by public proclamation on June 2, 1926, announced that :

His Majesty's Government, as at present advised, decline to accept the verdict as proof that the four persons mentioned above are innocent of the charges made against them. . . .

The effect of this judgment must be to endanger the safety of foreigners in Egypt. . . .

In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government must reserve complete liberty to take such steps as the future may show to be necessary for the discharge of the duty incumbent upon them.

Was the Wafd the sole power that had thus been able to obstruct the course of justice? Those who knew what was going on behind the scenes have not hesitated to describe the murder of the Sirdar as a Masonic crime.

It will be remembered that Sir Lee Stack was District Grand Master of Egypt and the Sudan, that is to say of British Freemasonry in those countries, and that Zaghlul was Honorary Grand Master of Idris Raghib's dissident Grand Lodge of the Grand Orient. But two of the six men released at the second trial were also members of the latter lodge and both lived to take high office in the Government later. Sir Lee Stack was thus doubly hateful to the terrorist lodge of the Wafdists—as the representative not only of British power in Egypt, but of British Masonry, the hated rival of the Grand Orient. So the same secret tribunal which had been detected behind the assassination of King Carlos of Portugal, behind the Sarajevo murders and so many other mysterious happenings, had claimed one more victim, and those who know the formidable power wielded by the Grand Orient, and particularly by *the men who form its inner councils*, will be able to

comprehend the immunity accorded to the authors of the crime and the silence maintained on the identity of the "masters in the background" referred to in the first trial.

At the same time, the assassination of the Sirdar admirably suited the plans of Moscow; indeed, it was discovered at the time that intimate relations existed between the murder gang and the Bolsheviks. The younger brother of the two Enayats, brought to justice at the first trial, was found to have frequently visited a Soviet agent in Berlin.

In Egypt the Communist Party at this moment appeared to be in abeyance, for after the trial of the leaders in July 1924 they had judged it prudent to carry on their activities more secretly. But in April 1925 the Cairo police had discovered a vast underground Bolshevik organisation directed by Avigdor Weiss, who, after a visit to Russia, had returned on a mission to Egypt, where he was known as "the Eye of Moscow." During the week-end of May 30-June 1, fifteen Communists, including Charlotte Rosenthal, were rounded up and Weiss was later added to the list. These, with a slight alteration in personnel, which reduced the number to thirteen, were brought to trial in January 1926 and, all but Charlotte, sentenced to deportation.

This display of authority, and the removal of the principal leaders, brought a momentary check to the movement, and for about two years the Communist Party remained quiescent.

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks carried on their usual policy of supporting the Nationalist movement in pursuance of their own aims. For although hostile to Zaghlul as to Gandhi, the Bolsheviks clearly perceived the use that could be made of the Wafd. In a confidential communication to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Egypt, the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International, usually spelt IKKI) in May 1925 observed:

The ECCI is of the opinion that the Party must take full advantage of the acute relations existing between British Imperialism and the Nationalists led by Zaghlul, in order to give greater prominence to the struggle for the independence of Egypt and the Sudan. . . .

While sharply criticising the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the bourgeois nationalists, the Communist Party of Egypt must at the same time co-operate with them in all cases when they combat the Right Political Groups who are the direct instruments of British Imperialism.

It was evident therefore that the Nationalists could be depended on to carry out the schemes of Moscow even more

effectually than the Communist Party of Egypt, and although their ultimate aims might differ widely, Zaghlul and his followers could be made use of to carry out the first part of Moscow's programme—the destruction of British power in Egypt. Indeed, if we compare their programme with that of Moscow, we shall see that the two were practically identical. Both demanded : 1, the total abolition of British control and the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt ; 2, the abolition of the " capitulations," which gave freedom from Egyptian law and taxation to foreign residents ; 3, the abolition of British control over the Suez Canal ; and 4, evacuation of the Sudan by the British.

It was therefore not only with the Wafd, but with the Bolshevik conspiracy that Lord Lloyd was called upon to deal after his appointment as High Commissioner. His able administration as Governor of Bombay during the revolutionary agitation of 1919 in India, which he handled with firmness and discretion, his knowledge of and sympathy with the Oriental mind, fitted him admirably for the task. But his difficulties were increased by the " Idealists " at home. When in the spring of 1926, just after the second trial of the men implicated in the murder of Sir Lee Stack, the Zaghlulists were returned triumphantly to power, Lord Lloyd at once perceived the imprudence of allowing Zaghlul to become Prime Minister and persuaded him to renounce office. A Cabinet was then formed under Adly Pasha, including Zaghlul, who continued to direct affairs from behind the scenes. In the following year, on August 23, Zaghlul died, and was succeeded by Nahas Pasha as leader of the Wafd.

The history of Anglo-Egyptian relations from this moment to the present time follows on almost precisely the same lines as the history of British relations with India during the same period—the Conservative Government, under pressure from the Labour Party, proposing concessions, the Wafd, emboldened by this appearance of weakness, increasing their demands, with Lord Lloyd striving on one hand to hold the balance between the authority of King Fuad and the encroachments of the Wafd, and on the other to combine the policy of the Idealists with the protection of British interests in Egypt.

On July 18, 1927, a Draft Treaty was submitted to Sir Austen Chamberlain by the Egyptian Legation in London, demanding the surrender of several points—Capitulations were to be done away with, and the British garrison to be withdrawn from Cairo to " elsewhere"—presumably the Suez Canal. This

was refused, but after the death of Zaghlul, a Draft Treaty was drawn up in February 1928 between Sir Austen Chamberlain and Sarwat Pasha, now Prime Minister, which was described by the Foreign Secretary as "an honest and generous attempt to reconcile Egyptian national aspirations with the vital needs of the British Empire."¹ The Wafd, however, was able to overrule the Cabinet and bring about the rejection of the Treaty, owing to Great Britain's continued refusal to withdraw all British troops from Egyptian territory. Sarwat Pasha then resigned and was succeeded by Nahas Pasha, so that the whole control of the political situation now passed into the hands of the Wafd. On March 30 the new Premier addressed a letter to Lord Lloyd, declaring that the Egyptian Government was perfectly capable of protecting foreigners and protesting against British interference in the proposed abrogation of the Public Assemblies Act of 1923, regulating political meetings and demonstrations. Considering that when in office in the past the Wafdists had done nothing to check disorders and that the Report of the Egyptian Director-General of Public Security showed a steady increase in crimes of violence, the foreigners, not only the British, were panic-stricken at the prospect of British control being withdrawn, and Lord Lloyd was voicing the opinion of the whole foreign community in firmly declining to accede to these proposals.

Nahas Pasha was finally dismissed by King Fuad and replaced by Mahmoud Pasha, a former Zaghlulist, but now a Liberal, who believed in friendship with Great Britain. On this account Mahmoud met with violent opposition from the Wafd, and the result was a crisis, only ended by King Fuad's action in dissolving Parliament for three years, suspending certain articles of the Constitution, and leaving Mahmoud in possession of the field.

Throughout this period Lord Lloyd handled the situation with the greatest skill and firmness. Whilst careful to respect the principle of Parliamentary Government, he had not hesitated to intervene when foreign interests were in danger. It was also largely owing to his influence that the Bolshevik movement had been kept in check. This, although quiescent for a time, had continued its underground activities.

When at the trial of the Communists in 1926 it had become evident that they were principally members of the chosen race—that is to say, of the race habitually chosen by the

¹ *The Times*, March 8, 1928.

Bolsheviks for the propagation of their doctrines abroad¹—Moscow decided to change the nationality of its emissaries, and in 1927 Italians and Greeks were sent to replace the deported Hebrews.² These were followed later by a number of young Egyptians, trained at the Moscow College for Propaganda in the East. On May 8, 1928, twenty-one of these freshly imported Communists were rounded up, and a number were sent back to their native lands.

Charlotte Rosenthal, however, was still left at large, and this same spring went to Moscow to get fresh instructions for the Egyptian Communist movement. Meanwhile other Jewish agents had remained in the country under a different guise. In Egypt, as in England, in Turkey and in Palestine, "Soviet Trade" provided the most convenient cover. In 1926 a pseudo-commercial agency, known as "Russo-Turk," had been started at Alexandria by one Semeniuk, a Polish Jew from America, and immediately after his arrival Soviet ships began to arrive at Egyptian ports, carrying Russian products at ridiculously low prices—an early attempt at "Russian dumping." In November 1927 Semeniuk, convicted of spreading Bolshevik propaganda, was deported, but in the same month a Soviet ship arrived at Jeddah, where a revolutionary centre had been formed by two Jews, Hakimoff and Belkin. On board were several Bolsheviks, who proceeded to set up a Russo-Turkish Mission for the sale of flour and sugar at a very low price. King Ibn Saud had no desire to harbour more Bolshevik microbes within his borders, and little pressure from the British was required to induce him to send the new arrivals back to whence they came. The Bolshevik centre at Jeddah was, however, not destroyed, and a picked man, who had been deported from Egypt for Bolshevik activities, was left in charge of the mission.

In spite of these repeated discoveries of Bolshevik intrigue, another Soviet agent, named Mayers, had been allowed to visit Egypt in 1927, and to set up an agency in Alexandria under the name of "Textile Imports Limited." This again was found, after two years, to be a cover for Communist propaganda, and in April 1929 two of the men employed in it—Vassiliev and Rudolf, alias Pinnis, were deported.

Communism to-day in Egypt remains, as was later stated

¹ Although at the present time a number of Jews have been removed from the Government of Russia, they still form almost exclusively the personnel of Soviet Embassies and trading concerns abroad.

² *The Times*, May 7, 1928.

in the Press, "a secret, dangerous, criminal conspiracy"¹ of which it would be difficult to estimate the extent. But for the firm action of Lord Lloyd it is probable that it would have assumed greater proportions. In a speech in 1930 he attributed the serious position of British overseas trade to "the enormous range of Communist activity all over the East." It was to this, he added, that we owed "the declension and betrayal of our great strategic and commercial position in Egypt."²

During the four years that Lord Lloyd was in office the whole situation changed beyond recognition. British prestige was restored, the relations between Upper and Lower Egypt were put on a good footing, not a single British officer was assassinated, foreigners enjoyed a sense of security, and the Egyptian people were prosperous and contented.

But the presence of an administrator so capable of appreciating the potentialities of the situation was necessarily inconvenient to all the intrigues at work in Egypt, and both to Moscow and the Wafd the removal of Lord Lloyd became the most urgent necessity. The advent of the Labour Government to office in June 1929 gave them their opportunity.

Already in the autumn of the previous year a Wafdist delegation, headed by William Makram Ebeid, had gone over to London to carry out propaganda and confer with the I.L.P. with regard to the evacuation of Egypt by the British. Heartily as the I.L.P. and indeed the Labour Party might sympathise with the aims of the Wafd, they were, however, still powerless to further their realisation.

But as soon as the news of their allies' triumph at the General Election of May 30, 1929, reached Egypt a band of agitators set forth for London, openly boasting that now the Socialists were in office they would bring about the fall of Lord Lloyd. They little knew that the way for this event had already been paved by the Conservative Government.

Advocates of the "Give Labour a chance" theory, who were fond of declaring that a Labour Government "could do no harm" since it would be held in check by the two Constitutional parties, had always overlooked the fact that "Labour," once in office, would have access to all the confidential docu-

¹ Letter from Mr. H. Leslie Boyce, M.P., to the *Daily Telegraph*, December 27, 1929.

² Speech at the dinner of the Bradford section of the Institute of Bankers, *The Times*, February 4, 1930.

ments in Government Departments, as well as to the secrets of the various branches of the Intelligence Service. This opportunity for examining every card in their opponents' hand had not been wasted by the Labour Party during their brief term of office in 1924; it proved of inestimable value now that a pretext was needed for getting rid of the principle obstacle to the Treaty they proposed to make with Egypt. Immediately after his arrival at the Foreign Office, Mr. Henderson received a communication from Lord Lloyd and, as he afterwards related, was "much struck" by what he believed to be "the spirit that underlay it." Clearly it was not the spirit of surrender. Mr. Henderson thereupon sent for the papers relating to Lord Lloyd's term of office and, on going through the correspondence that had passed between the High Commissioner and Sir Austen Chamberlain, made the pleasing discovery that what he described as a "wide divergence of views" had existed between them. These were afterwards summarised by Mr. Henderson in Parliament under the following points:

1. In 1926 Lord Lloyd had opposed Zaghlul becoming Prime Minister, whilst Sir Austen Chamberlain was for non-intervention. Lord Lloyd's view was finally accepted by the Cabinet.

2. In 1926-7, when the attempt was made to get rid of all British officials in Egypt, Lord Lloyd wished to insist on their retention, but was overruled.

3. In the case of the Army crisis of 1927 Lord Lloyd wished to put a stop to the undermining of discipline and penalisation of officers for holding views distasteful to the Wafd. The Cabinet finally decided in favour of Lord Lloyd.

4. In the matter of the Public Assemblies Bill, before referred to, Lord Lloyd had held that every possible effort should be made by His Majesty's Government to prevent the bill of 1928, abrogating the existing regulations, from becoming law.

The Foreign Office at first disagreed, but the British Government finally concurred with Lord Lloyd's view and authorised him to send an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of the bill and even ordered warships to proceed to Egypt. Lord Lloyd, however, persuaded Nahas Pasha to "postpone" the bill, and thus by diplomatic action avoided the necessity for force. The warships were accordingly recalled, and no further attempt has since been made to revive this dangerous measure.¹

5. In the spring of 1929 Lord Lloyd had opposed new taxes on British subjects, which under the Capitulations could not be

¹ On this point see *Election Notes for Speakers* for 1929 issued by the Conservative Central Office, p. 348, which provides a complete justification of Lord Lloyd's attitude.

imposed without the consent of Great Britain. Lord Lloyd was overruled.

In a word, Lord Lloyd had been guilty of expressing his opinion in favour of defending British interests under the terms agreed to at the time of the Declaration of Egyptian Independence in 1922, and in three cases out of five the Cabinet had finally decided that he was right.

All this gave Mr. Henderson his chance. But amongst the Foreign Correspondence placed at his disposal the best find of all was a letter from Sir Austen Chamberlain of May 28, 1929, proposing a complete "resettling of the principles on which his Government had hitherto conducted relations with Egypt."

That a Conservative Minister should commit the imprudence of dispatching a communication of this nature two days before the General Election can only be explained by the Party's blind confidence that they were bound to come in again with a working majority. Otherwise to risk the document falling into the hands of their opponents and serving as an argument against their own administration, and as a weapon against one of the staunchest supporters of Conservative principles, would appear as nothing less than a betrayal.

Mr. Henderson was quick to see his advantage, and instantly wired to Lord Lloyd to the effect that the divergence of views which existed between him and the Foreign Office would not be lessened under the Labour Government and would, indeed, be "unbridgeable." As Mr. Henderson himself expressed it: "The telegram that I sent to Lord Lloyd was of such a character that I think most people would have accepted it as an invitation to terminate his position."¹

The High Commissioner returned to England and, after what Mr. Henderson described as a "friendly exchange of notes," on July 23 relinquished his post. In a word, Lord Lloyd was dismissed.

The public indignation created by this event was not directed only against the Labour Party, for the facts brought to light at the debate in the House of Commons on July 26 created the clear impression that Lord Lloyd had been the victim of disloyalty from his own side—an impression that Sir Austen Chamberlain, being abroad at this moment, was unfortunately not present to correct.

¹ Debate in Parliament on July 25, 1929.

The Labour Party were thus able to justify their action by saying that :

The supersession of Lord Lloyd in Egypt was revealed not as a break with Tory policy, but as a continuation of Sir Austen Chamberlain's line.¹

How far Sir Austen Chamberlain was personally responsible must remain a matter for speculation. There were undoubtedly influences at work behind the Foreign Office which few Ministers would have been capable of withstanding. The effects of those influences were seen in the " Christmas Memorandum " of 1926 to China ; they were felt again in the affairs of Palestine, to which reference will be made later.

At any rate, the part played by the Conservative Foreign Secretary on these successive occasions was not calculated to hearten Imperialists, and the publicity given to the affair of Lord Lloyd dealt a heavy blow to British prestige in the East. It was evident now to the Wafd that the representative of Great Britain could be defied with impunity if he took a firm line where British interests were concerned. Thus emboldened, they proceeded to make further demands, and Nahas Pasha now reiterated that they would be content with nothing less than complete independence.

A new Draft Treaty was drawn up on August 1, 1929, by the Labour Government between Great Britain and Mahmoud Pasha, which was in effect an almost complete surrender. The military occupation of Egypt by the British was to cease, the British troops were to be removed to the Suez Canal, the responsibility for the lives and property of foreigners was to devolve on the Egyptian Government, whilst the status of the Sudan was to revert to that of 1899, when it was under Anglo-Egyptian control.

Mr. Henderson explained that this was the extreme limit to which he could go : it was no doubt as far as he could venture whilst the Labour Party remained a Minority Government. That they would go much further once they were in a majority could not be doubted from the views expressed in the *Daily Herald*, which, as before, continued to act as the mouthpiece of the Wafd. According to the *Daily Mail* the Socialists were already contemplating the internationalisation of the Suez Canal in accordance with the demand of Moscow, whilst, according to the *Daily Herald*, Mahmoud Pasha, who had

¹ *Labour Research*, September 1930, p. 212.

recently been over in London to confer with Mr. Henderson, expressed the opinion that Great Britain would soon hand over the defence of the Canal to Egypt.¹

The effect of this surrender was, as usual, not to bring peace but a fresh outbreak of agitation. The Wafd now stood out for further concessions, opposed the Treaty, and clamoured for the resignation of Mahmoud Pasha and a return to Parliamentary Government—of course under the Wafd.

In all this they were supported by the *Daily Herald*. So the extraordinary situation was created that the British Government was professing to legislate in the interests of Great Britain, whilst its official organ was encouraging a band of agitators, who were as much rebels against their own King as they were enemies of British power in Egypt.

At the elections that finally took place in December the Wafd was returned to power in triumph with Nahas Pasha as Prime Minister, and for the first time since the Declaration of Independence in 1922 Egypt was placed under the control of a completely Wafdist Cabinet.

In March 1930 a Wafdist delegation led by Nahas—and including Makram Ebeid and Ahmed Maher, who had both been arrested in connection with the murder of the Sirdar—arrived in London with a view to obtaining further concessions, particularly with regard to the Sudan, which the Egyptians were determined to have, at least in part. But the Labour Party was still unable to yield more at present, and on May 8 negotiations finally broke down.

After his return to Egypt, Nahas Pasha came into conflict with King Fuad and was obliged to resign. A fresh crisis arose. On June 19 a Cabinet was formed by Sidky Pasha, but owing to his friendly attitude towards Great Britain the new Ministry met with determined opposition from the Wafd. In July riots broke out, and the situation became so serious that King Fuad again closed down Parliament. The Wafdists replied with a plot to dethrone the King, and the *Daily Herald* joined in the abuse of which he became the object. Nahas Pasha then started a campaign on Gandhist lines, as Zaghlul had done before him, including a no-tax campaign. By July 22 the riots in Alexandria had reached their climax, and the situation was only saved by the army and police, still controlled by British brains.

Thus only a year after Lord Lloyd had left Egypt prosperous and peaceful, the country was once again thrown into confusion.

Date of August 26, 1929.

Although in time Sidky Pasha was able to bring about more settled conditions and to relegate the Wafd to the position of a sort of Soviet working in the background of affairs, British prestige was irretrievably ruined, not only in the eyes of Egyptians, but of the foreign residents, who had trusted to the protection of Great Britain. As the *Corriere della Sera* of July 18, 1930, observed, the demonstrations in Alexandria, though above all anti-British, had a common foundation of xenophobia.

British intervention is therefore necessary from an international standpoint. The British cannot leave Egypt to civil war without failing to meet an engagement solemnly taken towards the other European nations which, in such a case, would reacquire the right to act on their own account in the interests of their nationals.

In other words, where Britain has surrendered, other nations, still prepared to stand up for their own interests, will step in and establish their supremacy. If at this moment Italy seems to be turning towards other friendships, it must be partly attributed to this cause. No strong and virile country seeks to ally itself with weakness, and the policy of surrender pursued by Great Britain throughout the past twelve years must, if continued, lead not only to the loss of her prestige amongst the peoples of the East, but to the alienation of European Powers who can no longer count on her support.

The question that inevitably arises is : why was this policy continued after its failure had again and again been demonstrated ? In the world of science a process that has proved unsuccessful is not repeated, but in the world of politics experience seems to count for nothing. In Ireland and in the East every surrender had been followed by a fresh outbreak of agitation ; at home attempts to placate the revolutionary elements had merely increased their violence ; at the Peace Conferences efforts at conciliation had been met with the demand for further concessions ; overtures to the Soviet Government had been answered by an intensification of anti-British propaganda. Yet in spite of all this the theory persisted that to take a firm line would be "provocative," and that the only path to peace lay in further surrenders.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SURRENDER TO ZIONISM

THE surrender in Palestine turned on an entirely different issue from the surrenders in China, India and Egypt. Here it was no question of giving independence to a population that had hitherto existed under British administration or of sacrificing British rights, but of fulfilling a pledge given to a people that had voluntarily ranged themselves on the side of Britain in the War.

Until 1915 Palestine remained under the dominion of the Turkish Empire, which necessitated the Arabs fighting for the Turks throughout the first stages of the War. In the course of this year, however, a series of letters was addressed to the Sherif Hussein of Mecca¹ by Sir Henry MacMahon, the High Commissioner for Egypt, in the name of the British Government, promising the Arabs their independence if they would fight on the side of the Allies. Appeals addressed "To the Arab officers and soldiers in the Turkish Army in Palestine" were also conveyed to the Arabs themselves by means of leaflets thrown from British aeroplanes by British officers, calling on them to come over to the Allies and win their freedom for which Great Britain was fighting together with the Sherif.

As a result of these promises the Arabs deserted from the Turkish armies and entered the War on the side of the Allies.

Meanwhile quite a different plan was maturing in the brains of certain leading Jews and their Liberal allies—the old Zionist plan of a Jewish Palestine. As early as January 25, 1915, Lord Bertie recorded in his diary that the Baron Edmond de Rothschild and a Russian co-religionist had approached him about what he considered "an absurd scheme," which they represented as having the approval of Lord Grey, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Herbert Samuel and Lord Crewe :

¹ Later King of the Hedjaz.

It contemplates the formation of Palestine into an Israelite State, under the protectorate of England, France or Russia, preferably of England.¹

Lord Bertie clearly foresaw all the complications that must arise from such an arrangement amongst the Allies and amongst the Christian Churches, but as the Arabs were still fighting on the side of the Turks, the far more serious complication of their rights did not yet enter into the question.

Three days later, on January 28, 1915, Mr. Asquith (later Lord Oxford), then Prime Minister, recorded in his diary that the same scheme had been put before him by Sir Herbert Samuel in the form of a memorandum headed "The Future of Palestine." Lord Oxford appears to have regarded it as no less fantastic than had Lord Bertie.

It reads almost like a new edition of *Tancred* brought up to date. I confess I am not attracted by this new addition to our responsibilities, but it is a curious illustration of Dizzy's favourite maxim that "race is everything," etc.

The Zionists, however, pursued their scheme, which was finally launched, not under the auspices of the Liberals, who had hitherto championed it, but in the name of a leading Conservative statesman. On November 2, 1917, Mr. (later Lord) Balfour was persuaded to append his signature to the famous Declaration that bears his name, which took the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild, stating :

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

This was, of course, quite incompatible with the pledge given two years earlier to the Arabs, for however the idea of a Jewish "national home" might be interpreted, it was not in the power of Great Britain to offer it if Palestine was to become an independent Arab state. Even if nothing more was meant than that the Jews should be allowed to make a home there under Arab rule, it was for the Arabs, once independent, to offer this hospitality. One can only conclude that Lord Balfour in

¹ *Diary of Lord Bertie*, vol. i, p. 105.

signing this Declaration, owing to his philosophic detachment from the practical affairs of life, had either never heard of the MacMahon pledge or had forgotten all about it.

In order to realise the discrepancy between the promise now made to the Zionists and the earlier promise to the Arabs, it is necessary to refer to the exact pledge embodied in the "MacMahon correspondence." On October 24, 1915, Sir Henry MacMahon wrote to the Sherif Hussein of Mecca as follows :

Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca.

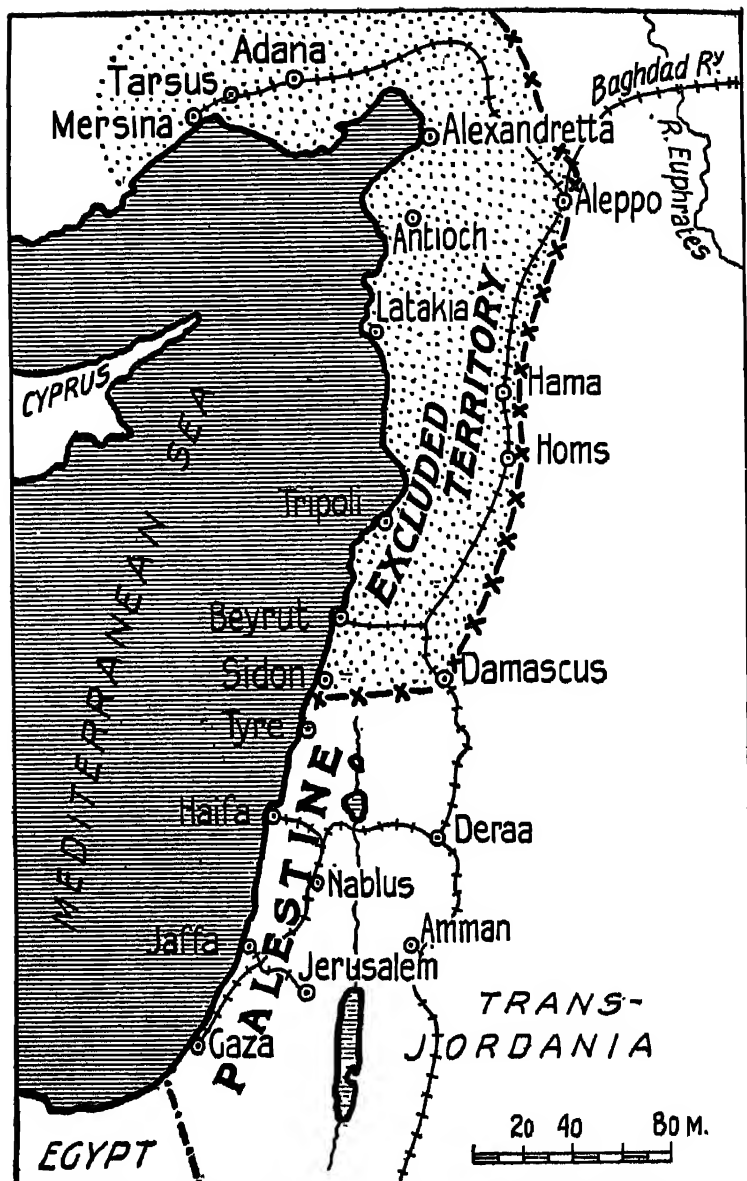
The Sherif's boundaries as given in a letter dated July 14, 1915, were Mersina on the north, the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra on the east, the Indian Ocean (except Aden) on the south, and the Red Sea and Mediterranean up to Mersina on the west.

The territories excluded from the above boundaries were those "portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo"; that is to say, the Lebanon in which France was said to have certain interests and of which the Mandate was finally allotted to her.

The British Government afterwards contended that Palestine formed a part of the excluded territory, but a glance at the accompanying map will show that it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be described as lying to the west of the four localities mentioned. If it was intended to exclude Palestine, why were localities south of Damascus not mentioned or the line of demarcation given as the territory lying *to the west of the Jordan*, Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo? Clearly, then, at the time, Palestine was understood to be included in the territory promised to the Arabs.

It should be noted that the MacMahon correspondence was never published by the Coalition Government, but the most important portions, such as the one quoted above, were brought to light in various ways, notably in a book entitled *The Palestine Deception*, by Mr. J. M. N. Jeffries of the *Daily Mail*, published in 1922.¹ The same policy of suppression was pursued by the Governments that followed after the

¹ See also the leaflet *The Palestine Arab Case*, issued by the National League, 16, St. James's Street, S.W.1, which gives a résumé of all these negotiations.



Reproduced from *The Palestine Deception* by permission of the *Daily Mail*.

Coalition, for the Palestine Mandate having now become a *fait accompli* it would have been extremely awkward to avow the previous pledges given to the Arabs. The Report of the Shaw Commission, in giving the history of our relations with Palestine, was obliged to glide over the question of the MacMahon pledge by saying: "No useful purpose would be served by entering upon a discussion of the terms of this correspondence." So although the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the Mandate are quoted verbatim, the text of Sir Henry MacMahon's letter to the Sherif of Mecca could not be given. The Report, however, went on to observe that:

it is sufficient to say that, as a result of the *rapprochement* effected with the Sherif Hussein, large sections of the Arab peoples within the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, became favourable to the cause of the British Empire and her allies in the Great War.

Later on the Report further admitted the dropping of appeals to the Arabs in Palestine from British aeroplanes in 1917, and that "it was stated that in consequence of this and similar appeals many Arabs deserted from the Turkish Army and served with the Allied Forces in Palestine."

The whole of this discreditable incident was ventilated in the House of Commons as recently as last November, when two Members challenged the Government with continuing the policy of suppression. Mr. Morris, Liberal Member for Cardigan, said:

Undoubtedly definite promises were made to the Arabs. . . . We know that the Balfour Declaration has been printed, although we do not know what it means . . . but the MacMahon correspondence has not been published. Why not? The present Government, like the previous Government, have always declined to publish the MacMahon correspondence.¹

Mr. Seymour Cocks, Labour Member for Broxtowe, spoke to the same effect:

When during the War we wanted the warlike assistance of the Arabs, we pledged ourselves to give them their independence. I know that successive Governments have said that that pledge was not definite, and that they have shielded themselves behind suppressed correspondence. . . . It is quite certain in my opinion that the Arabs were promised their independence.²

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. ccxlv, No. 15, col. 158. Debate of November. 17, 1930.

² *Ibid.*, col. 165.

Even the Shaw Report admits that the general result of the *rapprochement* effected with Sherif Hussein in 1915 was to convert the feeling of the Arab population into friendliness towards the British occupation, that "this was encouraged by every kind of propaganda available to the War Office," and that "the real impression left upon the Arabs generally was that the British were going to set up an independent Arab State which would include Palestine."

The Arabs heard nothing about the Balfour Declaration at the time it was made, and it was not until the end of 1918 that vague rumours reached them that some compact contrary to the MacMahon pledge had been made to the Jews, and it was to quiet the alarm these rumours created that a further pledge was now given to them.

On November 7, 1918, Lord Allenby, then in command of the British Army in Palestine, had the following Proclamation posted up in every village throughout the country :

The War . . . is to assure the complete and final liberation of the people so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free desire of the native population. They are far from wishing to impose any form of Government on the people against their will.

As the population of Palestine at this date comprised 90 per cent. of Arabs it was clear that this could only mean that the administration of the country was to be in the hands of the Arabs as promised by Sir Henry MacMahon's Declaration three years earlier.

But in spite of these two pledges the plan of a Jewish National Home was pursued by the Zionists and their friends, and a draft scheme was placed before the Peace Conference by the Zionist Organisation on February 7, 1919.

The way for this had been prepared in America. As the *Menorah Journal*, a Jewish monthly magazine in that country, afterwards related in its issue of February 1928 :

The objective was not merely to maintain the esteem and willing co-operation of President Wilson himself, but to permeate every avenue of his administration and the whole British service in this country, with a friendly understanding of Zionism. . . . So there was no fear of the outcome of the Peace Conference. The avenues of approach had been carefully smoothed, enough Zionists were on duty in Paris to establish a ready contact wherever accurate information was needed, and every important member of the

Wilson Commission had been deliberated with in New York before the Commission sailed for France. . . . Nothing was left to chance.

Meanwhile the same influences were brought to bear on Mr. Lloyd George, whose entourage at this moment was largely composed of leading Jews and Zionists, amongst whom was Mr. Lucien Wolf, "the man who fought for Jewish rights at Versailles" and who was said to be in possession of all the secrets of the Foreign Office.¹

Nevertheless, the demand of the Zionist Organisation that "the high contracting parties should recognise the historic title of the Jews to Palestine" was not conceded. On the contrary, Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations was framed as follows :

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such times as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

In the autumn of this year, on October 19, 1919, Mr. Lloyd George, in speaking to the Trades Union Congress, said : " The Arab forces have redeemed the pledges given to Great Britain and we should redeem our pledges."

Thus in accordance with the new principle of " self-determination " the Arabs of Palestine, as elsewhere, were given the right to administer their own country though provisionally under a Mandatory Power.

At the San Remo Conference of the Allies in April 1920 the Mandate for Palestine and Mesopotamia was given to Great Britain, and the Mandate for Syria to France, but it was also decided that the Balfour Declaration should be included in the Mandate for Palestine. This was clearly a complete reversal of the plan incorporated in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and also in conflict with Article 20, which stated :

The members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagement inconsistent with the terms thereof.

¹ *Jewish Guardian*, June 11, 1920.

In case any member of the League shall, before becoming a member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

The Balfour Declaration having been made before Great Britain became a member of the League and being inconsistent with Article 22 of the Covenant, should therefore have been considered as abrogated.

The League of Nations thus violated its own Covenant when on July 24, 1922, it confirmed the Draft Mandate embodying the Balfour Declaration, which had been drawn up on January 5, 1921, and had not been endorsed by Parliament. As Mr. Stoker, the able advocate of the Arabs, pointed out: "The Mandate never received the Parliamentary sanction of Great Britain, the only Parliamentary expression of opinion being that of the House of Lords, which voted against it."¹

It will be seen, then, that in Palestine the native population had a very just cause of complaint. On the strength of the promise of independence contained in the letter from Sir Henry MacMahon they had thrown in their lot with the Allies, only to find that their land had been offered as a National Home to an alien race. A business firm which had thus violated its engagements could be charged with breach of contract and proceeded against in a court of law. No milder term than "breach of contract" can be applied to the action of Great Britain—that is to say, of Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Cecil, Lord Balfour and certain other British politicians under pressure from the Zionist Organisation—in going back on her pledges to the Arabs. Then, again, the promise of self-determination, after being embodied in the League of Nations Covenant, was revoked by the League itself in confirming the Mandate in 1922.

Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the Arabs rose in revolt and a series of disorders took place in Palestine in the spring of 1919-20, culminating in the Jaffa riots of May 1921. Advocates of the Mandate endeavoured to show that the Arabs had misunderstood its terms and were needlessly alarmed at the engagements entered into with the Zionists. The Zionists, however, did nothing to allay these fears. On September 21, 1919, Dr. Weizmann, then head of the Zionist Federation in America, stated in an address:

¹ *Daily Mail*, December 27, 1929.

We said we desired to create in Palestine such conditions, political, economical and administrative, that in a given time, as short as possible, Palestine should become as Jewish as England is English, or America is American.

Dr. Eder, Chairman of the Zionist Commission in Jerusalem, went further still and declared :

There can be only one National Home in Palestine and that a Jewish one, and no equality in partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the members of that race are sufficiently increased.

The Colonial Office endeavoured to check these pretensions by sending a statement of policy to the Zionist Organisation on June 3, 1922, in which it was said :

Unauthorised statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become "as Jewish as England is English." His Majesty's Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. . . . They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be founded in Palestine.¹

The meaning of this last passage is certainly obscure. If Palestine "as a whole" was not to be made the national home for the Jews, were they then to be relegated to some settlement such as Tel Aviv? Clearly this was not intended nor would it be likely to satisfy them. Then if they were not to be confined within these limits, in what sense was Palestine to be their "home"? In turning to the dictionary we find the word "home" defined as "one's house or country," hence the Jews could reasonably claim that if Palestine was to be their home it was also to be their country, administered by them—which would be a direct violation of Arab rights.

The truth is that no way could be found of reconciling the pledges given to both Arabs and Jews, and the British Government, finding itself involved in an inextricable situation, allowed the Jews a preponderating influence in the affairs of the country whilst endeavouring to placate the indignant Arabs by half-hearted intervention when the infringement of their rights became too flagrant. Sir William Joynson-Hicks

¹ Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation, June 1922, p. 18 (Cmd. 1700).

(now Lord Brentford) voiced the opinion of many patriots, anxious that Britain should maintain her reputation for fair dealing, when he wrote in 1921 :

The Arabs . . . decline with the utmost determination to come under Jewish rule. They see a High Commissioner a Jew, his private secretary a Jew, the head and second of the legal department . . . Jews, the head of the contract department a Jew and many more. . . . We are denying to the Arabs the right of self-determination.¹

Before the War the Arabs and Jews had lived together in peace and amity. But the new immigrants who were now pouring into the country were of a very different class from the old Jewish settlers. Only a small proportion were enthusiasts inspired by true Zionist fervour. The wealthy Jews of Western Europe seemed little disposed to leave their Regent's Park palaces or their historic mansions in the Faubourg Saint Honoré for villas in Palestine, and the age-long utterance of the Passover : " Next year in Jerusalem ! " continued as a pious aspiration rather than as a project to be put into immediate execution. " The Jews who are entering the country," Sir William Joynson-Hicks had said in the letter quoted above, " are not the Rothschilds, the Montagus and Samuels, but the sweepings of the ghettos of Central Europe, with no money, no energy and no ability." Worse than this, a number were Bolshevist agents, sent into the country to stir up trouble and exploit Arab resentment against Great Britain.

BOLSHEVISM IN PALESTINE

In Palestine as in Egypt the native population, attached to the Moslem faith, offered an unpromising soil for the dissemination of Communist or even Socialist doctrines, and the movement was almost entirely confined to Jews.

The organisation principally concerned in propagating Socialism in Palestine was the Jewish Social Democratic Party, " Paole Zion," formed in about 1900. This organisation was accepted by the Second International and affiliated with the British Labour Party. In 1919 a World Congress was held at Stockholm, at which various advanced Socialist resolutions were passed, but a motion to join the Third International was out-voted. The Conference advocated a system of colonisation for Palestine on co-operative lines, which would produce

¹ Letter to the *Morning Post*, September 5, 1921.

mass-immigration of Jewish labour, and prepare the way for a Jewish Socialist State.

At the fifth World Congress held in Vienna in July and August 1920 a clash occurred between the Right and Left Wings of the Party, the Left Wing again voting for affiliation with the Third International. A letter addressed to the Jews of Palestine by one of the leaders gives an idea of the methods by which the Arabs were to be roused to revolt :

" The new bureau of the League [Paole Zion] is now sending Jews into Palestine with the object of dissolving our organisation and building up again a new kosher Paole Zion Party. . . " After referring to the difficulty of dealing with the present Jewish colonists, " the most parasitical and unproductive of all Jewish colonists in the world," the letter went on to say that the Party must " create common economical and political institutions for all the workers in the country. They must bind together the Jewish and the Arab workers in a close economic union, they must actively mingle in this, spread out and combine all their strength in order to overthrow the foreign Imperial power and free the country from the oppressive English yoke." ¹

The Left Wing of Paole Zion and the Communists were therefore in accord as to the policy to be pursued in Palestine, and at a Left Wing Congress that took place in 1922 the Soviet Government was represented and a resolution in support of it was passed. A number of Paole Zionist agitators, mainly Russian Jews, were later sent through Vienna and Salonica to create disturbances in the Orient.

Meanwhile a Communist Party of Palestine had been formed in 1919, but two years later was suppressed and has since continued to function as an illegal organisation. In 1922 a Workers' (i.e. Communist) Faction was formed in the Hista-druth—the Jewish workers' organisation—affiliated to the Second International. A section of the M.O.P.R., known in England as the I.C.W.P.A., was also founded.

In the summer of 1925 a great effort was made to unite Arab and Jewish workers around a militant policy by the organisation of a Unity Committee known as the " Ehud," consisting of representatives of the Communist Party, the R.I.L.U., Paole Zion and Railway Workers' Union. Early in 1927 a Conference of these combined bodies was held at Tel Aviv, which had now become the headquarters of the

¹ *After the fifth Paole Zion World Conference : a letter to the Hebrews of the S.A.P.P.Z. in Palestine, by I. Meyersohn, Vienna, 1920. (Printed in Yiddish.)*

Communist movement in Palestine, whilst Palestine in its turn had become the headquarters of the Communist movement in the Near East. Owing to the energetic action of the Turks and French, of King Ibn Saud in Arabia and of Lord Lloyd in Egypt, Bolshevik agents had been driven out of the surrounding countries, but found easy access into Palestine. Amongst these was Avigdor, alias Constantine, Weiss, whose activities in Egypt were described in the preceding chapter, and who was largely instrumental in organising the Communist Party of Palestine.

In this campaign the hand of Germany as well as Moscow could be clearly detected. It has been mentioned earlier in this book that Bolshevik agitators were drafted into Palestine via Genoa and Milan by order of the Druidenorden; in September 1921 the police received definite evidence with regard to this German plot, and of the existence in Berlin of a bogus passport office to facilitate the entry of these agents. At the same time arms and ammunition were imported into Palestine from Germany and Austria.

In May 1922 the present writer received a communication from a well-informed source in Constantinople, stating that a certain Emigration Bureau in that city was receiving young Jews from Russia, equipping them with money and propaganda material and sending them openly to Palestine under the auspices of the Zionist Emigration Bureau, but secretly with the object of stirring up a revolt against the British in Palestine, the object being to enlist the Arabs on their side by impressing them by propaganda with the advantages of Bolshevism and the need for co-operation between them and the Jews in order to get rid of the hated British. . . . The writer went on to say :

I can quote you chapter and verse, the names and the addresses of the people concerned in this conspiracy, I can send you copies of the propaganda books and pamphlets which they are issuing in Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, German and English. . . . I can give you the contacts between these organisations, secret and official Trade Delegations, also between them and the German organisations, which are linked up in their turn with the Enver and Kemalist organisations. . . . Now we have two distinct political blocs, the Entente on the one hand and the German-Bolshevik bloc on the other. . . .

The situation in Palestine was, of course, immensely complicated by the emissaries of the latter bloc, who, although

mainly Jews, stirred up the inhabitants both against British and Zionist influence. It must be remembered that the Jews are by no means united on the question of Zionism ; there are the Assimilationists, particularly to be found in Germany, who only ask to be absorbed in the country of their adoption ; there are also the Communists, whose outlook is entirely international and who have no use for the limits of a national home in Palestine.

The agents of Moscow were thus as great a menace to Zionism as to British rule in Palestine, and their influence was felt at the time of the Jaffa riots in 1921. But such is the solidarity of the Jewish race that, although the Zionists suffered keenly from the presence of these compatriots who spared no pains to vilify them by propaganda, pamphlet and manifesto, either the tie of blood or the fear they inspired deterred the Zionist officials from taking resolute action against them. In 1920 legal proceedings had been taken at Jaffa against a small group of Bolshevist agents, who were prosecuted with the assistance of law-abiding Jews for disturbances created amongst the Jews themselves. The trial was stopped, however, by order of Zionists in the administration, the accused were released from custody and, as related in the preceding chapter, the Rosenthals, who were included amongst them, were allowed to return to Alexandria. This action thoroughly discouraged the moderate Jewish elements in Palestine, disheartened the police and emboldened the revolutionaries. As a result, an active Bolshevist centre was founded during the winter of 1920-1 and an illegal armed force known as the " Haganah " was formed amongst the Jews.

According to the testimony of a British official on the spot, " the active Bolshevist disturbances in Palestine subsequent to the Jaffa riots were checked solely by Mr. Winston Churchill's foresight and firmness in dispatching an absolutely pure British *gendarmérie* for service in that country in lieu of a local defence force of 50 per cent. Jews as recommended by the local Government and which was in consequence disbanded."

It was thus only by the presence of a British defence force that any semblance of peace could be maintained.

The impunity with which Bolshevist propaganda was carried out later on, and the latitude allowed to alien agitators, was the subject of wondering comment in the Arab paper *La Palestine* in November 1927 :

We are certain that the Government of Palestine knows all that is going on, and the danger has recently been borne in on it. . . .

Perhaps it leans to indifference and patience in the face of danger and lets the Communists alone in order that it may learn the ways and methods they depend on for their purposes in India and China and other dependencies of the Great British Empire. . . . Possibly there are other reasons for its silence and sleepiness, namely of finding out who the Communists are, one by one, not realising that so long as the door of Jewish immigration is open, Moscow will return twenty for one, and while it is studying the ways of Communism in Palestine, the Palestinians are themselves becoming Bolshevised and the danger is increasing till the resulting putrescence shows itself.

Although, as has been said, the Arabs of Palestine as a whole remained unreceptive to Communist doctrines, it was more possible to exploit their national sentiments than in Egypt. For whilst the Egyptian fellahin had no grudge against British administration, but on the contrary had greatly profited by it, the Palestinian fellahin had a very real cause for complaint against the British-Zionist Government, which permitted the excessive immigration of Jews and the continued acquisition of land by Zionist bodies. Many of these immigrants were workers who deprived the Arab fellah of his livelihood and were a burden on the country as a whole. Moreover, by the acquisition of large tracts of land and the eviction of Arab cultivators and farmers, about 30 per cent. of this class were rendered landless. Some of these lands were acquired from desperate fellahin who had fallen into the clutches of money-lenders asking an interest of 60 per cent. ; for the Agricultural Bank, which had helped them before the War, had been liquidated and no substitute was provided.

Then, again, large commercial enterprises passed into the hands of Zionists, such as the Rutenberg Concession, whereby Pinhas Rutenberg, a Zionist Russian Jew, was given the right to harness the waters of the Jordan and the Oudja rivers, and to acquire the monopoly of electric current drawn from these. Later, in 1929, the Dead Sea Concession, with its vast stores of mineral wealth, was given to another Russian Jew, Moise Novomeisky.

It was easy, therefore, for the emissaries of Russia and Germany to represent Great Britain to the Arabs as the author of all their troubles. The Communists everywhere have consistently supported the Arab claim to independence, supporting their contention with really incontrovertible arguments. Even Jewish Communists have ranged themselves on the side of the Arabs against their compatriots the Zionists.

In a declaration from the Jewish workers to the seventh Arabian Congress in September 1928 it was stated :

We the Jewish workers of Palestine renounce officially our connection with Zionism and declare our whole-hearted agreement with the oppressed Arabian peoples. We realise that Zionism is only a toy and a weapon in the hands of British Imperialism. Palestine is the land of the Arabs and belongs to the Arab people who have worked it with their sweat and blood for hundreds of years. The home of the Jew is where he has been born. . . .¹

The Communists thus appearing to be their only friends, a few Arabs allowed themselves to be drawn into the Communist organisation, the "League against Imperialism," and the "National Arabian Congress" of Palestine was represented at the first Congress of the League in Brussels in February 1927. At the meeting of the League at Frankfurt-am-Main in July 1929, Yussuff, the President of the Egyptian National Radical Party, in an examination of the Arab question, showed that "Arab countries groan under the yoke of English, French, Italian and Spanish Imperialism. The possible replacement in the post of Egyptian High Commissioner would change nothing in the situation. It was necessary without delay to send the English troops out of Egypt and create a Federation of Independent Arab States."

Thus by playing on national sentiment, as they had done in India and China, the enemies of Great Britain were able to enlist the co-operation of Arabs, who little realised that the Federation of Arab States they dreamed of would be the Federation planned by Moscow under the control of the Third International. The Bolsheviks were able also to impregnate a certain number of the poorer population of Palestine with their ideas on the necessity for an armed uprising against "British Imperialism" as the ally of their Zionist oppressors.

It would be beyond the scope of this book to enter into details on the long story of Arab grievances which led up to the sanguinary riots of August 1929. The Arabs were afterwards declared to have been the aggressors, but few people have been informed of the provocations they had long endured.

The reception given by Zionists to the Shaw Report,² the Hope Simpson Report³ and the two White Papers issued by

¹ Published in the *South African Worker*, September 19, 1928.

² *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929*. Cmd. 3530. March 1930.

³ *Palestine, Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, by Sir John Hope Simpson, C.I.E. Cmd. 3586. October 1930.

the Labour Government on their policy in Palestine,¹ afforded the British public some insight into the nature of the forces by which the Arabs were confronted. These exhaustive surveys of the situation, whilst strongly sympathetic to "Zionist aspirations" throughout and paying every possible tribute to Jewish agricultural enterprise, contained, however, striking disclosures on the plight to which the Arabs had been reduced under the Zionists' regime. For example, in the Hope Simpson Report it is stated :

Actually the result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that land has been extra-territorialised. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain an advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or to cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he is deprived for ever from employment on that land. . . . The principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provisions of Article 6 of the Mandate, but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country.

The declaration of the British Government's policy based on these Reports contained but the barest elements of justice to the Arabs. In the first White Paper, of May 1930, the principle was laid down that "immigration should not exceed the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals," and a temporary suspension of immigration was said to be under examination. Again, legislation was to be introduced "with the object of controlling the disposition of agricultural lands in such a manner as to prevent the dispossession of the indigenous agricultural population."

In the second White Paper, of October 1930, these points were enlarged on.

With regard to immigration it was definitely stated that "at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve."

It was shown that 29·4 per cent. of the rural Arab families in the villages were landless, and that attempts to prove that

¹ *Palestine, Statement with regard to British Policy.* Cmd. 3582. May 1930.

Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. Cmd. 3692. October 1930.

Zionist colonisation had not "had the effect of causing the previous tenants of land acquired to join the landless class have on examination proved to be unconvincing, if not fallacious."

It admitted that some grounds existed for the Arabs' suspicion that the "economic depression under which they undoubtedly suffer at present is largely due to excessive Jewish immigration."

It is impossible to detect any "anti-Semitism" in the above. This declaration of policy with regard to Palestine was, indeed, the one good thing the Labour Party had done since their accession to office. Yet these few passages asserting the Government's intention of showing some consideration for the claims of the Arabs were the signal for an outburst of unreasoning fury from Jews all over the world. The Jewish Press in Palestine spoke of "the cynical betrayal by Great Britain of the greatest trust in history," and of "the innate hypocrisy of the British"; the New York Jews assembled in crowds shouting: "Down with England!" Dr. Weizmann, President of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, resigned in protest.

The cause of this indignation is, however, not far to seek. Unrestricted immigration was the only way by which the Jews could hope to achieve their scheme of outnumbering the Arabs, and so attaining that predominance of which Dr. Eder had spoken in the afore-quoted passage. Mr. Jabotinsky had explained the same idea in the *New Palestine* of March 19, 1926:

The aim of the Zionist movement is the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine, west and east of the Jordan . . . Now there are in Western Palestine to-day about 600,000 Arabs and about 150,000 Jews. It has been calculated that under decent conditions the Arabs will, within a period of twenty-five years, increase to about 1,200,000. The difference—a million—has to be supplied by Jewish immigration, for our own birth-rate cannot play any considerable rôle in the business. Chalutzim, intelligentsia and even the modern middle-class have no enthusiasm for large families. A million immigrants in twenty-five years plus our own moderate natural increase—this will probably secure a Jewish majority. This means an average annual immigration of 40,000.

Any check on the number of immigrants admitted would naturally upset all these calculations and postpone the day of victory. Hence the imprecations against Great Britain.

The Labour Government had ventured further than it knew

when it dared to proclaim its intention of carrying out the recommendations of the two Reports on Palestine, by remedying some of the injustices from which the Arabs were suffering. A Conservative paper had tremblingly protested against its action in "setting the powerful international force of Jewry against us."

There are few men in public life who have nothing to gain by standing well with high finance, and still fewer who can afford to offend it. Hence the publication of the Government White Paper offered the occasion to Conservative and Liberal statesmen to vie with each other in denouncing the infamy of the Labour Party which hitherto they had treated with so much indulgence, and public men of all kinds hastened to write to the papers, declaring their unswerving allegiance to the aims of Zionism.

Thus attacked on all sides, there was nothing for the Government to do but to beat a retreat and remove the ban on immigration. The "powerful international force" which no statesman and no Government can withstand had won the day, and the Arabs must be left to their fate.

But the Palestine question has not been settled, nor can it ever be settled, as long as that country remains the scene of conflict between two irreconcilable aims. The Zionists will be content with nothing less than a Jewish State; the Arabs will never accept Jewish domination. That in a word is the situation which no amount of talk about reconciling Arab and Jewish aspirations can alter. They cannot be reconciled.

The *Morning Post* saw this from the outset, the Beaverbrook and Rothermere Presses have never ceased to urge the tearing up of the Mandate now that its unworkability has become evident. Even leading Jews have denounced it. In 1921 Israel Zangwill wrote:

In promising Palestine to the Jews our statesmen exhibited as reckless a disregard of the existence of the 600,000 Arabs as the Zionists themselves.¹

Mr. Edwin Samuel Montagu did everything in his power to prevent it. In his Diary for November 11, 1917, he made this entry:

I see from Reuter's telegram that Balfour has made the Zionist declaration against which I fought so hard. . . . The Government has dealt an irreparable blow at Jewish Britons, and they have

¹ Letter to *The Times*, May 8, 1922.

endeavoured to set up a people which does not exist ; they have alarmed unnecessarily the Mahommedan world and, in so far as they are successful, they will have a Germanised Palestine on the flank of Egypt. It seems useless to conquer it. Why we should intern Mahomed Ali in India for Pan-Mohammedanism when we encourage Pan-Judaism I cannot for the life of me understand.

Posterity will ask how England came to commit herself to this suicidal policy, and to pursue it once its failure had been demonstrated. The one thing that could have consolidated the Empire at the end of the War was a strong British-Moslem friendship. The Arabs of Palestine, Irak and Transjordan had voluntarily thrown in their lot with the Allies. In India the Moslems, with few exceptions, had ranged themselves on the side of law and order against the excesses of the Swarajists. Even in Egypt the Wafd represented only a seditious minority compared with the body of Egyptians who realised the advantages of co-operation with Great Britain. Yet in order to further the schemes of Pan-Judaism—aiming at economic predominance in Palestine and all over the Near East from Cairo to Baghdad—Great Britain deliberately set out to alienate a friendly and at the same time a warlike race, at the risk of antagonising the whole Moslem world and imperilling the very existence of the Empire. Thus the only Eastern country where the British Government has “stood up” to the Nationalist leaders is the one in which those leaders were prepared to be loyal to her. Even the Conservatives, whilst seeking to placate such men as Gandhi and Chen, the bitter enemies of England, showed no spirit of conciliation in dealing with the legitimate demands of the Arabs, and Arab delegations to this country have been obliged to depend on such unofficial support as is provided by the National League and the individual patriots gathered around its standard.

The full effects of British policy in the Near East will not be seen until war is again launched upon the world. Then, with an Egypt free to make her own alliances with stronger Powers, with a Palestine in which the warlike elements have been rendered hostile by the fatal Mandate, the whole of this key position may be in the hands of Britain's enemies.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST DITCH

FROM the long series of blunders, lost opportunities, pitiful surrenders and, at moments, even apparent betrayals, recounted in the foregoing chapters, what conclusions must be drawn? Are we to believe that Britain, only thirteen years ago so strong, Britain, the creator and ruler of a mighty Empire, Britain, the cradle of Clive and Wellington, of Drake, Nelson and Pitt, whose Parliament has in the past set an example of orderly legislation to the senates of the world—are we to believe that Britain at the present time is no longer capable of producing statesmen, men of vision and men of courage to save her in her hour of need? Must we believe, as our enemies assure us, that England is decadent, that the British Empire has had its day and must go the way of the dead empires of the past? I, for one, decline to accept this defeatist theory which is being sedulously instilled into the minds of the public in order to weaken their resistance to a cataclysm that they are being led to regard as inevitable. Britain is not decadent in the sense that earlier empires which perished were decadent. Gigantic things were accomplished by her during the Great War, and, though the flower of her youth perished, the country still pulsates with life and energy. In the realms of sport, of adventure, of discovery, the young men and women of Britain to-day perform feats of courage and endurance that would have astounded our ancestors. That they are still ready to rally in their thousands to the country's call was seen during the general strike. It is true that they are not politically-minded, and that, in general, the nation, over-intent on sport and pleasure, frequently displays indifference to the course of public events. But these characteristics are not evidence of national decay.

No, the British nation is not decadent to-day, and if it

perishes, it will be because the men in control of its destinies have surrendered it to its foes.

What has inspired this suicidal policy? Is it mere inertia, the disinclination to grapple with problems or to face realities? Or has there been throughout some unseen power holding our legislators in its grip and working on their minds through fear?

Our public men have seemed afraid to act. They were afraid of the Sinn Feiners, they were afraid of the Communists, they are now afraid of the Swarajists. The rulers of a nation that stood up to a Ludendorff and a Tirpitz quail beneath the threats of a Gandhi! They were afraid of putting up a determined opposition to the devastating force of Sovietism; they were afraid of what has been described as "setting the powerful international force of Jewry against them."¹

The Bolsheviki, like the Germans, well know the value of "frightfulness" in warfare. "Intimidation," wrote Trotsky, a Jew, "is the most powerful instrument in politics, international and internal. War, like revolution, is based on intimidation. . . . The same with revolution: it kills units, intimidates thousands."²

In every country the same phenomenon has been observed. Whilst refusing to recognise the danger of Bolshevism and the necessity for taking resolute action against it, the politicians have allowed themselves to be intimidated by its representatives and still more by the occult influences working in its favour.

But they are not afraid of patriots! "You have nothing to fear from the aristocrats," said Mirabeau to his followers, "they do not pillage, they do not burn, they do not assassinate, what can they do against you?" *Ergo*: stand in with those who do pillage, who do burn, who do assassinate, and you will be safe.

Hence, on the one hand, the policy of surrender in Ireland, India, China, Egypt, the surrender to Socialism at home and to every destructive force within the country, and, on the other hand, the most determined resistance to strongly patriotic movements, the discouragement of enthusiasts, the penalisation of men determined to defend the Empire, the hatred of "Die-Hardism"—by which is meant the resolute adherence to Party principles which others have deserted. In this resistance no weakness is shown.

The only way to conquer intimidation is by counter-intimida-

¹ See *ante*, p. 368.

² *The Defence of Terrorism*.

tion. Fascism triumphed in Italy by showing that patriotism, roused to action, could be more formidable than the forces of disintegration. Until patriotism makes itself feared in this country the power of intimidation exercised by the revolutionaries will continue to hold sway, not in the world of politics alone, but in the worlds of science, of literature and even of "Society" where individuals are to be found imbued with the same spirit of surrender, the same belief that it is advisable to "keep in" with Socialism and even with Communism, as the coming Power. The strange tendency to saw away the branch on which they sat was seen amongst the aristocrats before the first French Revolution and again amongst the nobles of pre-war Russia; but this betrayal of their class availed them nothing when the day of revolution came. The lessons of history show that it is the people who have identified themselves with revolutionary movements who are in the greatest danger at such a crisis, since the first act of every revolutionary government is to destroy all rival factions in order to establish its own ascendancy.

But the present generation has profited nothing by the history of past revolutions. Although for a hundred and fifty years the aristocrats of old France have been held up to scorn for their folly in dancing on the edge of the abyss, the members of what were once the "ruling classes" of our country, with the lessons of the French and Russian Revolutions behind them, remain, in general, completely blind to these warnings and continue to dance, less gracefully, on the edge of an abyss far deeper than that which engulfed their predecessors.

Disinherited posterity will ask how it was that, if Governments failed to act with energy, independent patriots of wealth and power did not put up a fight against the predatory advance of Socialism. How was it that at the outset of the Bolshevik campaign the capitalists of Great Britain, and indeed of all the world, did not coalesce and form a solid bloc in defence of their common interests? For it is not only in our own country that the same supineness has been observed; all countries, as Monsieur Coty points out, "are touched with the gangrene and not one has seemed resolved to draw the sword in self-defence." But for this inaction the "band of wild beasts" out to destroy all civilised society must have been promptly crushed. "If then the agents of Communism operate with so much assurance and with such contempt for laws and police . . . as much in monarchies as in democracies, we must

suppose that they have everywhere occult support and powerful allies." ¹

The vast financial resources of the revolutionary movement that can flood all the countries of the world with its agents and its propaganda provide a mystery that has never been explained. Clearly some Money Power of a formidable kind must be operating in the background. But for this the City of London, the Bourse of Paris, Wall Street and other strongholds of finance could not have failed to take alarm at seeing Capitalism threatened at every point, and to have put up organised resistance from the outset. In the face of any ordinary menace to its interests, "big business" is the first to fly to insurance companies and safeguard itself against loss. But even under the threat of its total extinction, "big business" saw no necessity for insuring against Socialism, and declined to regard it as presenting any danger. Nowhere was the danger of a Socialist Government less realised than in the City; nowhere was it more difficult to raise funds for counter-propaganda. Mr. Lloyd George has recently raised a storm of criticism by declaring that the City has given a wrong lead to the country; if he had added "with regard to the menace of Socialism," he would certainly have been right. But where does the City go, in these days, for advice? It goes, as do the politicians, as did Mr. Lloyd George himself, to international financiers, who have assured it all along that there was no cause for alarm. Hence the apathy of British capitalists before the rising power of the "Labour" Party and the devastating forces of Bolshevism. They had read how in Russia the right to private property had been swept away, land and wealth confiscated, and the owners of these had been massacred or turned adrift to shovel snow or to sell cigarettes at street corners. They had seen some of these unhappy people arriving on our shores, bereft of all they possessed and forced to earn their living in the humblest ways—officers of the Guards sewing shirts in attics, women of society serving in tea-shops or behind the counter. In Paris, as after the French Revolution, *ci-devants* took to driving cabs. In Switzerland luckless *émigrés*, unable to find work, threw themselves into the lakes to end their misery.

Yet with all these tragic events taking place before their eyes, the rich men of Great Britain—many of whom had themselves lost property in Russia—hardly made any effort to prevent the same thing happening in this country.

¹ *Contre le Communisme*, pp. 14-16.

The one country in which the owners of property as a class showed the intelligence to organise resistance to revolutionary propaganda was Norway, where a really admirable scheme was carried out by a central organisation, having on its Board a representative of each of the six great sections of Capitalists—banking, commerce, ship-owning, engineering, industry and farming. These men, realising that this was a sound form of insurance, kept the association supplied with funds and controlled its workings.

Instead of taking the initiative in this way, the Capitalists of Great Britain left it to patriotic individuals to form leagues and societies, the leaders or secretaries of which were obliged to go hat in hand to beg support, as if asking a favour, from the rich men whose interests they were defending even more than their own.

To-day even the most incredulous must recognise that the warnings given by such organisations, by the *Morning Post* and the *Patriot*, have been justified by events. A "Labour" Government has now been in office for a year and nine months and, although in a minority and unable to carry out a full-blooded Socialist policy, they have brought the country nearer to ruin than it has ever been before. The figures of unemployment are steadily rising week by week, the wheels of industry are slowing down, capital is pouring out of the country into lands which offer greater security for the investment of wealth; even the City has lost something of its habitual optimism and is beginning to realise that all is not well.

The Round Table Conference has led only to worse confusion in the Indian problem, whilst Zionist policy in Palestine is steadily rallying the whole Moslem world against Great Britain. The Optional Clause, compelling Great Britain to submit to the decisions of the International Court of Justice, has been signed by the "Labour" Party. The renewal of diplomatic relations with Russia has given a fresh lease of life to the Bolshevik regime, and the Five Year Plan, which is intended to deal the death-blow to Western Capitalism, continues its remorseless march over the starved bodies of the Russian workers. Meanwhile the militarisation of Russia is being carried on apace, and the warlike elements which have recently gained ground in Germany, secure in the conviction that a Britain permeated with Pacifist propaganda will offer no resistance, openly proclaim that the Treaty of Versailles must be torn up, the Young plan destroyed and all German war debts cancelled.

So, threatened at every point, Britain is being driven, not by superior forces, but by the voluntary spirit of surrender, to take up her stand in the last ditch. Will she make a stand there or is it now too late?

It is not too late. It will never be too late until the enemy within has been able to capture the whole machinery of State. If only at the eleventh hour the virile elements in the country will rouse themselves to action the situation may yet be saved, and the ruin, not only of the British Empire, but of all Western civilisation, averted.

Long ago Karl Marx declared that "the great catastrophe"—i.e. the collapse of "Capitalism"—would "be preceded by an enormous economic crisis," which it was the object of his teaching to bring about. To-day this prediction seems in process of fulfilment, largely owing to the efforts of his disciples. Far from Capitalism breaking down of its own weight, the precarious condition it is in to-day is the direct result of Socialist efforts to undermine it. The general sense of insecurity in industry, unsettled conditions in the East, the loss of foreign markets by strikes, undercutting by Soviet Russia—all these are causes to which the Socialists themselves have contributed, and the "world crisis" to which they attribute their inability to fulfil their promises with regard to unemployment is mainly of their own making.

It would, however, be an error to say that Socialists have no remedy for unemployment. Socialism, once installed, has a very definite remedy for unemployment, and that is the conscription of labour as in Russia. There is, of course, no unemployment on a slave plantation. And in the words of Mr. Bernard Shaw, already quoted: "Compulsory labour, with death as the final penalty, is the keystone of Socialism." Hence the impossibility for the "Labour" Government to accede to the requests now being made to it, that it should protest against the importation of timber produced by means of slave labour in Russia. Socialists cannot possibly protest against a system they mean to introduce themselves.

Such a system would prove even more disastrous in our country than in Russia, owing to the fact that England, being without Russia's agricultural resources and having lost her credit with foreign countries, would be reduced to starvation in a few months.

This is, nevertheless, the climax to which Socialist policy must lead. The Soviet regime is not an accident or the outcome of conditions peculiar to Russia; it is the absolutely

logical result of the doctrines on which the I.L.P., and consequently to a large extent the Labour Party, is founded—doctrines which in their Utopian form were disproved by countless failures in the early nineteenth century, and which in their application on a larger scale have produced the Slave State of present-day Russia. Until the mirage of Socialism is destroyed and its real system is revealed to the deluded working-classes everywhere, there can be no peace or progress in the world.

Yet whilst confronted by this urgent necessity the constitutional elements of the country continue to make war on each other and the Conservative camp is rent with divisions on the question of fiscal reforms. To talk of Protection, Empire Free Trade or extensions of safeguarding as the panacea for all our present ills is to ignore the vaster potentialities of the situation. Of what avail can any such systems prove if industry is still to be undermined by agitation amongst the workers or ruined by Socialist legislation, if Bolshevik propaganda is to continue unchecked, if the British Empire is to be disrupted and our Eastern markets lost for ever? Those Conservatives, whether supporters of Mr. Baldwin or of Lord Beaverbrook, who concentrate the attention of the public on the one issue of tariffs and divert it from the menace of Socialism are defeating their own ends by helping to keep in office a Party committed to Free Trade at any cost to the nation. The first step towards the fiscal reforms they advocate is to rid the country of the present Government and to replace it by one that will make the welfare of the British Empire, and not the furtherance of International Socialism, its first concern.

It is not a new Party or a new political creed that is needed, but a return to principles which appear recently to have been lost to sight. Nor is it merely a matter of leadership; the Conservative electorate has it largely in its own hands to bring about the required transformation. It can, through its local associations and at Party conferences, make its voice heard; it can demand to be represented by candidates chosen not for wealth or position, but for ability, for patriotism and for single-mindedness, men who will not be coerced and who cannot be intimidated.

The principles of true Conservatism, fearlessly applied, can alone save the situation, and remove, not only most of the causes of the present crisis, but provide a common ground on which patriots can meet. Then alone can there be a prospect of unity, which is so imperatively needed at this moment.

True Conservatism, as our forefathers conceived it, stands

for much more than economic measures or political theories. It stands for all the great traditions on which our country and Empire have been built up. It stands for honour, patriotism, loyalty to the King and the maintenance of the Christian faith. It stands for everything that has made England great. In so far as recent Conservative Governments have failed, they have failed because, largely through fear, they departed from these principles and yielded to pressure from forces bent on their destruction.

If only all Conservatives, abandoning the attempt to compete with, or to conciliate, their Socialist opponents, will return to the path of sane social reform their progenitors trod with so much honour in the past, and will take their stand courageously on the cardinal doctrines of their own faith, they may yet rally the country around their standard and save the Empire.

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